



HENRIK IBSEN

Painting by Lili Pet rssen

THE LIFE OF IBSEN

Halvdan Koht

VOLUME TWO

THE AMERICAN-SCANDINAVIAN FOUNDATION
LONDON GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
RUSKIN HOUSE 40 MUSEUM STREET W C 1

First published in Great Britain 1931

PRINTED IN U S A

Contents

I	IBSEN AND NORWAY	I
II	PEER THE NORWEGIAN	16
III	AFTER-PAINS	43
IV	THE POLITICAL PHRASEMONGER	56
V	INTEGRATION AND SQUARING OF ACCOUNTS	70
VI	THE THIRD EMPIRE	87
VII	POWER AND HONOR	107
VIII	A CORPSE IN THE CARGO	118
IX	WOMAN AND SOCIETY	139
X	GHOSTS OF THE PAST	158
XI	THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE	171
XII	PITY AND CONTEMPT	191
XIII	A CLASH WITH THE FATHERLAND	210
XIV	STRUGGLE WITHIN THE CONSCIENCE	225
XV	SUPPRESSED DESIRES	237
XVI	WORLD CONTROVERSY ABOUT IBSEN	259
XVII	THE HOME COMING	277
XVIII	TESTING OF LIFE	295
	EPILOGUE	310
	INDEX	329

Illustrations

HENRIK IBSEN	<i>Frontispiece</i>
SUSANNAH IBSEN	140
AGNES MOWINCKEL AS ELLIDA	148
WALTER HAMPDEN AS DR STOCKMANN	172
IBSEN ON HIS DAILY WALK	292
SCENE FROM "THE MASTER BUILDER"	302
IBSEN CENTENARY CELEBRATION IN OSLO	318
IBSEN AND HIS PHYSICIAN	325

Chapter One

IBSEN AND NORWAY

IBSEN once said that when he left home in 1864 he went "into exile." About the time that he wrote these words in a letter (1870) he expressed the same feeling in a poem, a revision of the verses entitled "The Eider Duck," which he had written in his youth. When at that time (1851) he described man's ruthless robbery of the eider duck's nest, he had no suggestion of remedy or hope for the bird.

Then feels the bird that his hope is lost,

Then a bleeding breast is all he owns,

Then pines he to death on a lonely coast

And it was thus with man too, as the dreams with which he had warmed his heart were plucked away from him, all courage must depart, and eternal night would come into his soul. But now, twenty years later, Ibsen had found a way of escape for the bird as well as for himself.

But steal this treasure, his third, his last—

One night he spreads his wings to the blast

With bleeding bosom the sea-fog dun

He cleaves, to the South, to the South and sun!

Ibsen had been forced to give up his dreams, and he could no longer remain at home. Everything there seemed to repel him,

and to rob him of courage and will To save his life, to save himself, he had to get away

"I had to escape from the swinishness up there," he wrote in a letter from Rome two years after his departure, "to be fairly cleansed There I never could preserve any wholeness of inner life, wherefore I was one thing in my production and quite another thing outside of it—wherefore, also, my production was not whole "

A year later he wrote to his mother in law, Fru Magdalene Thoresen "I am often unable to comprehend how you can endure it up there! Life there, as it now appears to me, has some thing unspeakably wearing about it, it wears the spirit out of one's being, wears the energy out of one's will It is the curse of narrow circumstances that they make the soul narrow "

The narrowness at home was, so to speak, both physical and spiritual There was dearth of great thoughts and wholeness of will, everything had to give way to the petty material considerations of everyday life There was no spontaneous enjoyment of art and poetry The community was so small and cramped that people were continually elbowing each other Ibsen had felt it altogether too poignantly at the time he published *Love's Comedy*, how small town gossip confounded writing and life Yet the worst hindrance, perhaps, lay in the many friends by whom one was surrounded and to whom one had to accommodate one's self

"Friends are a costly luxury," he wrote to Georg Brandes in 1870, "and if one's capital consists in a calling and a mission in life, one cannot afford to keep friends The expenditure in keeping friends does not, to be sure, consist in what one does

for them, but in what one, out of consideration for them, refrains from doing, whereby many a spiritual growth is crippled within one I have experienced it, and therefore I have to look back on several years during which I could not attain to being myself ”

Ibsen found great difficulty in speaking out freely and openly, especially perhaps with his best friends It grieved him, he never felt that he could stand undivided and true before them, as he wished to do He was shy, he could not lay bare his soul in the presence of others And thus, though unwillingly, he took on the tone of his associates “I understand clearly,” he once wrote, “that it is really only in the solitude of my own thoughts that I am myself ”

Therefore he had to live far away, and to be by himself It was not because Norway happened to be narrow and small, but because it was his home No matter where he had lived in the world, his home would have been a prison and a peril to him He could not be free before he got away

There were enough people who wished to call him back again Only three months after he had gone away, he received an offer of the director's position at the Christiania Theater But he declined promptly and decisively, although the position would have given him an assured livelihood, and each time the offer was repeated, in 1870 and in 1884, he put it aside with equal promptness He admitted that there was in the thought of the theater something that drew him, something that awakened longing and unrest in his mind, but he started back apprehensively—he was afraid “The point is,” he wrote as late as in 1884, “that I could not write freely and unreservedly and fully up there,

which is the same as saying that I could not write at all ”

He had set out with the thought of remaining away for a year or two After nine months had passed, he wrote Bjornson a letter which never reached its destination, a circumstance for which he was later thankful, for the letter, he admitted, was written in an uncharitable and bitter tone against his own country, and in it he had declared that he wished never to go home again But some weeks later he wrote “After all, I must go home”, and the same thought was repeated at the end of two years However, he continued to shrink from it, and delayed his return year after year

At the mere thought of home, he was filled with misgivings He expressed something of himself in the words which Brand uttered as he viewed again the neighborhood of his childhood

*As I near my home, I change,
To my very self grow strange—
Wake, as baffled Samson woke,
Shorn and fetter'd, tamed and broke*

He seemed to feel a sort of numbness, he lost his strength and courage, and could not keep a hold on his great thoughts and dreams

At various times, particularly in 1866, he thought of settling in Copenhagen and establishing his home there, feeling for a time that this was perhaps “the true center of Scandinavian life, least fettered by the prevailing prejudices ” But he grew less and less inclined to take up his abode there Copenhagen was not home, and yet it was not sufficiently foreign He feared that there, too, he would be too closely pressed between friends and enemies He was aware of the constraint upon Georg Brandes

there early in the seventies, and he began to fear that the atmosphere of Copenhagen would prove to be as suffocating as that of Norway

His choice, then, was between Oslo and countries quite foreign. The thought that sooner or later he must go home was like a nightmare to him. Outward circumstances, particularly concern for the education and training of his son, might impel him to return, but he constantly resisted the thought. Even in so foreign a country as Germany he felt that he was restrained and checked by the society about him. "What will it be, then, when I finally reach home?"

"I hardly understand," he wrote in 1868, "how it will be possible to live outside of Italy, and least of all how it will be possible to live in Christiania. But clearly it must be done. I feel, meanwhile, that one must isolate one's self there—at least that I must do so if I shall not make enemies of half the people." He repeated the thought in the following year. "It is not possible for an author to live there unless he is able coldly to decline all party affiliation and to assume a position of independence."

On the other hand, he was forever laying plans for a visit to Norway, and almost every year we hear of an intended trip home. But even this was delayed. The mere thought of a winter in Norway frightened him. "Either I should within a month have made all the people there my enemies, or I should again slip into all sorts of disguisements and become a lie both to my self and to others."

He was in Sweden in 1869, and in Denmark in 1870. But to Norway he did not venture before 1874, and then the visit gave him no taste for more. The sense of aversion remained in

him even ten years later "Ten years ago when, after an absence of another ten years, I sailed up the fjord, I literally felt my breast tighten with a sense of oppression and faintness The same thing was true of my stay there, I was no longer myself among all those cold and uncomprehending Norwegian eyes in the windows and on the streets"

Thus he was more than ever held off by fear and more strongly than ever impressed by the thought that he could not permanently thrive or work in Norway This time he waited eleven years before he returned for another visit

This does not by any means indicate that he severed all connection with his native land Thoughts of doing such a thing had indeed arisen in him while the question of a government stipend was being considered, in 1863 and in 1866 At various times later, too, his anger flared up, and he threatened to make himself a foreigner Thus in 1871, when the printer who during the fifties had charge of *Illustreret Nyhedsblad* took it into his head to reprint *The Vikings at Helgeland*, announcing besides that he intended to reprint also *Lady Inger of Östrat*, Ibsen became wild with anger at this "intended raid on my purse", and as the printer would not yield, a lawsuit followed When the author's friend, M. Bukeland, ventured to hint that the question of legality might be doubtful, Ibsen was beside himself with rage "Here I sat," he wrote home, "in happy peace of mind, working on my new drama From Sweden, from Denmark, and from my surroundings here, I experience only things that must give me joy, but from Norway every ill fortune seems to come upon me What do those people want? Am I not sufficiently far away?" Then the thought darted into his mind that he wished to part

The Life of Ibsen

VOLUME TWO

company with such people "This is to me a matter of great importance, for if Jensen's plan of spoliation should win sympathy and support at home, it is my intention, come what may, to sever all connection with Norway and never again set my foot there"

However, his anger soon cooled, in about two months he again wrote about visiting Norway And as he won his case against the printer in both the city court and the supreme court, he had proof that the country would protect his rights These fits of anger left no permanent traces, except in so far as they helped to keep alive in his thought both his native country and his indignation But both of these were conditions for his writing

He had been able to sever all connection with his parental home, for he felt no spiritual relationship with it, but in the larger home, his native land, he was so firmly rooted that it would have been spiritual death for him to break away from it He had his own work in mind when he let Brand say

"To a man's feet his native haunt

Is as unto the tree the root

If there his labor fill no want,

His deeds are doomed, his music mute"

Brand had to remain at home and fight his battle there Any other action appeared to him as a desertion Ibsen had felt the same thing in 1862 when, writing about the actors at the Norwegian theater, he said that they had better endure hunger and privation than desert their calling

It is clear from what he wrote at the time that he believed other artists, such as poets, might leave home and yet not shirk their duty toward the fatherland, that, indeed, it might be neces-

sary for their work itself that they settle outside the country. It seemed now to be so in Ibsen's own case. A Norwegian journal *ist* once, in 1869, wrote of him in a Scandinavian periodical "It were well if he would come home for a time, otherwise his memories may grow too hazy and the products of his mind too shadowy." But Ibsen maintained that it did not at all harm him to stay away, he believed that his works would prove the contrary to be true.

One advantage was that away from home he felt much safer against influences of all sorts. While waiting for the "attacks" that he thought must follow *Brand*, he confidently wrote home "Things may take their course, they shall not succeed in subduing me." Later, when he looked back upon *Peer Gynt*, he was always reminded that he had dared to write thus "recklessly" only because he was so far away from home. He realized inwardly that he was a writer "who because of the entire direction of his genius had to run considerable risks." Therefore, too, he must feel himself so strongly fortified that he *could* run risks.

Another advantage lay in the fact that he thought he saw his home more clearly when he was away from it. "One has at least this advantage," he wrote in a letter of 1867, "when living in a foreign country, that one receives the national life from home purified and in extract, one is spared the knowledge of what happens on highways and byways, and that is a gain." Therefore he advised Bjornson also to get away from home. "Both because distance widens one's horizon, and because one is himself at the same time out of people's sight." And some years later, in 1870, he wrote "We human beings are far sighted, we see things best at a distance. Whatever is irrelevant, whatever belongs only to

the day, is given an undue importance when one is in the midst of the crowd, at least I have felt it to be so " In his speech to the Norwegian students in 1874 he repeated this thought about far sightedness, but he now limited it as especially the gift of creative writers We do know that Björnson and Jonas Lie experienced the same feeling, and Ibsen, at least, said of himself "Never have I seen my home and its actual life so fully, so clearly, and so minutely as from a distance and during my absence "

On a summer evening in 1867, while he was at work on *Peer Gynt*, which is certainly the most Norwegian of all that he has written, he stood looking out upon the Italian island of Ischia Suddenly he said "Look at that fine hop garden!" A Danish friend who was with him made the remark "But it is not hops, it is grapes," and Ibsen corrected himself "Yes, you are right! Now and then I have to pull my own ears to realize that I am not in Norway "

The next summer, 1868, he went up into the Alps, and he was to return to them many times From his very first place of residence there, Berchtesgaden, we learn that he liked to make journeys far up into the mountains, and that he even took up again the art of his younger days by painting the scenes he saw He was especially enthusiastic, his old guide from Berchtesgaden has told us, when, seated on the high Watzmann peak, he looked out upon Königssee It was so much like a Western fjord in Norway that he could dream he was home again

Many years afterwards, on an autumn day in 1890, he was in Munich and stood on the bridge across the Isar, watching how the river, swift and swollen in the fall flood season, carried away

logs and trees The bridge shook, and people fled, but Ibsen remained standing, to watch and remember, for thus he had stood in boyhood and gazed down into the rapids of the Skien river A stranger stopped beside him, and Ibsen was so absorbed in his thoughts of home that he began to speak to the stranger—in Norwegian The stranger proved to be an Englishman, and afterwards the conversation was carried on in French But the content of Ibsen's words was how everything repeats itself and how memories become dreams It was Norway that had awakened in him

In a way, his home was always with him When, in completing his collection of poems in 1871, he came to view his entire career as a poet, he gave his homesickness the form of verse in the little poem "Burnt Ships" He had turned his ships southward, leaving the snow for summer and sunshine He had even burned his ships, so that only the smoke blowing northward made a bridge between himself and his homeland, and yet

*From the sun-warmed lowland
Each night that bends,
To the huts of the snow-land
A horseman rides*

Dreams and memories turned homeward And it was remarkable how recollections of youth and childhood appeared in his writings, much more now than ever before—Skien in *The League of Youth*, Grimstad in *Pillars of Society*, and many, many other memories in other places We must oftentimes wonder at the way in which everything he had seen during his boyhood, when he sat musing and seemed to live in a world

by himself, was engraved in his brain as in a film. His great ability to *see* became really evident now that these things returned in his writings, and the truth is that the more he used these memories of home, the richer and more vital his writing became.

In speaking of his work, he invariably said that the thing which counted with him, the thing that he always struggled with and worked toward, was to see each one of his characters vividly before his eyes. He must know them through and through, so that he was not only familiar with what they thought, but so that he heard how they spoke, saw how they walked, and stood, and were dressed. Every button in their clothing must be visible to him. But if all this should be true, the characters must necessarily be Norwegian, otherwise he could not know them thoroughly, could not make them speak naturally. And it seemed to himself that their very temperament must be ultra Norwegian.

In 1886, when he had published *Rosmersholm*, a German friend said to him that there was something unfamiliar in the book, something which a German could never fully understand. "Yes," cried Ibsen, much more animated than he usually was. "You are right about that. I comprehend. The people up there are indeed different from you here, and he who would know me fully, must know Norway. The grand but austere nature with which people are surrounded in the North, the lonely, isolated life—their homes often lie many miles apart—compel them to be indifferent to other people, and to care only about their own concerns, therefore they become ruminative and serious minded, they ponder and doubt, and they often despair.

With us every other man is a philosopher! Then there are the long, dark winters, with the thick fog about the houses— Oh, they long for the sun!”

It was a part of his own temperament that he thus described and tried to explain, and the explanation was neither particularly original nor deeply striking. But it shows how intimately he felt himself to be rooted in Norwegian nature and life and racial temperament. That was where his mental life grew and found nourishment. It was always on Norwegian society, Norwegian thought, and Norwegian questions that his works were built, they could not have been possible without this foundation. When he had roamed about for more than six years, he still said in a letter “But I feel more Norwegian at heart than I have ever done before.”

There was something almost clairvoyant in the way he followed events at home. He associated with but few aside from Scandinavians while he lived among strangers, and he felt that something was lacking when he could not meet with Scandinavians, but many a time, too, he led quite a lonely existence, and it was largely a matter of chance if he met anyone from whom he could hear news. He corresponded but little with people at home, and months might pass without a word from Norway. But he could not bear it for too long a time. “It is intolerable for any great length of time to be outside of all communication with home,” he once wrote in 1868, after having spent two months in traveling without receiving any mail. Of Norwegian newspapers he seldom read more than a single one—during the first ten or twelve years it was *Morgenbladet*—and sometimes one Danish paper besides. But he read his newspapers

with an avidity which was quite unusual, searching them through from beginning to end, advertisements and all, and devouring every word. In the same way he utilized people who came from home, letting them talk and relate, while he listened with undivided attention. Thus he was informed about everything, and sensed every movement of life at home.

Perhaps he understood and interpreted everything in the light of memories of the youthful years that he had spent there. He did not always comprehend the great new forces which arose in Norwegian society and made it over. But in the light of his own memory, things were given exactly such form as served to kindle fire and life in his own soul.

It is clear enough that life in strange lands gave him many kinds of knowledge and left deep imprints in him. He himself was well aware that "the soil has much to do with the forms within which the imagination works creatively." When he thought back upon *Bland* and *Peer Gynt*, his first works from Italy, he felt that he could say with one of the characters in Ludvig Holberg: "See, this was an intoxication of wine." And in *The League of Youth*, his first work from Germany, he thought there was something reminiscent of "Knackwurst und Bier." He noticed also that German philosophy and politics broadened his outlook on the world.

But he never became what in German is called *eingebürgert*, spiritually at home, in any of the foreign countries—Germany or Italy—in which he lived. Here, too, he found it necessary to isolate himself if he would be free. It may be a question if he ever, as long as he was abroad, became thoroughly familiar with ways of living and thinking in the foreign communities. But

the foreign country at least gave an opportunity for comparison, and as he observed life and events there, everything at home seemed still smaller and paltrier, and his anger could burn still hotter

Foreigners who know Norway only through Ibsen's works often judge our country by the pictures he gives in them. But this is unfair, for it is not objective portrayal, it is polemical writing he has given us, and the strongest evidence of what Norway was, is perhaps after all the fact that Ibsen felt so bound to it. All of his writing was directed against his homeland. If this land had not given him the "gift of sorrow," for which he had so often asked, it had at least given him an abundance of "the gift of anger," and he felt, as did Brand, that here, toward this people, "The true, the sovereign Love—is Hate!" Yet his hatred was love. More than once he grasped an opportunity to assure his countrymen that he did not at all hate Norway or everything Norwegian. "It is the excrescences upon our social life, that I abhor." But of these excrescences he found enough to raise his anger, and his writings grew from them.

Once, in 1873, a German critic called Ibsen's poem, "Signals of the North," a *Hohngedicht* against Germany. But Ibsen instantly protested. "There are altogether too many things at home, in our own lands, which I find it necessary to mock, to permit me to take upon myself the trouble of mocking the Germans."

He remained always a Norwegian poet, and could not be anything else. For it was Norway that added fuel to the flame of his anger. It was to this he gave expression in the greeting that he sent home for the millennial festival in 1872.

*My people, who in bowlfuls deep have given
The wholesome bitter, strengthening drink whereby,
Near to my waiting grave, as poet I
Took strength to fight 'mid broken rays of even,
Ye who gave exile-staff and ever nigh
Knapsack of sorrows, shoes for one care driven—
Ye who have all this solemn burden lent me,
Greeting I give from lands where ye have sent me*

*I greet ye, thanking unintended merit
That purified my soul through painful toil
All thriving in the garden of my spirit
Has still its root within my homeland soil
If here their growth is rich and full and easy,
The cause lies in your weather, gray and breezy
What sun-heat loosened, first in mist was living
Homeland, have thanks, my best remains your giving*

Chapter Two

PEER THE NORWEGIAN

IT was a new face which thus appeared in the Scandinavian world of letters—a man who drew poetry from new well springs. To many there seemed to be something strange about him, which caused them to draw back, but to a larger and larger number, and especially to the youth of his day, he had an appeal greater than that of almost any other man.

Early in 1867 (January 27 and February 3) the Danish *Illustreret Tidende* published a full account of Ibsen's life, written by the journalist A. Falkman. It was the first time that a connected story of his work had been presented to Danish readers. Here it was pointed out how the new Norwegian authors, and especially Ibsen, must attract the youth of Denmark, for they revealed an ethical principle in their writing in contrast to the æstheticism of the older Danish writers, which people were now growing tired of.

The thing that in this connection especially characterized Ibsen was pointed out by Georg Brandes in a critical treatise in the *Dansk Maanedsskrift* the same fall, the first attempt to penetrate into the spiritual groundwork of Ibsen's writings. Brandes saw that the vital principle in him was his burning ethical indignation, his hatred of all deceit and hypocrisy. "Greatness and strength, of the passions and of the will, and of the will that is inspired by passion, that is the ideal of this author."

Brandes, however, was still so bound by old literary conventions that he could not regard the drama of indignation as true art. He praised with understanding and joy all the rich poetic art of *The Pretenders*, but he thought that in *Brand* Ibsen had strayed from the right way. "Therefore," he said in concluding his article, "it is necessary that he leave the direction he has taken in *Love's Comedy* and *Brand*. Unfortunately there is no doubt that it will be difficult for him to do so, but he is too much of an artist to fail in the long run to see what is poetry and what is not."

The next year, when Brandes reprinted this treatise in his *Studies in Aestheticism*, he was forced to delete the last statement. The new drama which Ibsen had just then published destroyed his hopes, it did not conform to Brandes's literary demands, but continued in Ibsen's own way. This drama was *Peer Gynt*.

"After *Brand*, *Peer Gynt* followed almost as of itself," wrote Ibsen two years later. Thus it seemed to him then, and there was an inner truth in the statement. But as a matter of fact the drama did not come quite of itself.

When he had completed *Brand*, Ibsen first thought of going back to the work for which he had made plans before he set out from Norway, the drama about Magnus Heineson. For many months he struggled with the plan, but though it seemed to himself to be "full grown" within him, nothing came of it. In the spring of 1866, in May, we hear that he was more and more inclined to begin the drama of Julian instead. The subject had then been in his mind for more than two years, and it interested and attracted him more and more strongly.

During four summer months of this year, from June to September, he again lived in one of the small towns in the Alban hills, this time Frascati. He had rooms in one of the old castles there, Palazzo Grazioli, and had in his immediate neighborhood remainders of the classic age, namely, the country house and theater of Cicero. From his workroom he had a broad view of the Roman Campagna with mountains round about, he thought he saw before him "the field on which the world's history has presented its greatest battle." These must be favorable surroundings for the development of a drama about Julian, and it must have been to this work he referred when he told Botten Hansen late in July "Now I shall soon begin to write in earnest, I still go about wrestling with the material, but I know that I shall soon have the beast under my control, and the rest will come of itself."

But it did not come of itself. Instead he began, toward the close of August, a work of an entirely different kind. He went back to *Love's Comedy* and began revising it for a new edition. Hegel was at once willing to publish it. Ibsen thought that "the language must be purified" first, and he used the month of September for this work. The purifying consisted in taking out all the ultra Norwegian words in the play, in order to make it more acceptable for Danish readers.

It was at this time he received notice that the Norwegian government had granted him a new traveling stipend, and when he returned to Rome in the beginning of October, after completing the revision of *Love's Comedy*, he made plans to go to Hellas and to Paris. He clearly had the intention of doing preparatory work for the drama about Julian.

A month later, however, on November 2, he wrote to Hegel that he was uncertain what he would first begin to write "I have yet another subject or two in mind, but this very dispersion in my interest shows that none of them is yet sufficiently ripe, however, I feel with certainty that the ripening will soon be accomplished, and hope that sometime in the spring I shall be able to submit to you the finished manuscript"

These words are, I believe, the first indication that a new subject matter was awakening within him—that which later became *Peer Gynt*. But what was the reason that this new subject was born within him and *Brand* thus received its natural sequel?

It was surely no accident that during the last summer he had taken up again *Love's Comedy*. He informed Hegel that this drama could be "regarded as a forerunner" of *Brand*, and we have evidence here that the mood which had created these two plays was still present in him. Moreover, the preface which he wrote for the second edition of *Love's Comedy* contained a sharp polemic thrust at Norway, ridiculing the "sound realism" which made the Norwegians settle down smugly in existing conditions and not brook anything that might disturb them.

When he struck out from the drama everything that was characteristically Norwegian, he did so not only with a desire to please Danish readers, but also as a means of expressing the anger and contempt with which he regarded the Norwegians. He seemed to have discovered that there was no vestige of truth in the national boasting at home, and he was heartily tired of everything that bore the name of nationalism. Especially he turned away from the campaign for a purely Norwegian language, which in his mind became a symbol of affected and un-

true national consciousness. For his own part, he had during the past years gone a good deal farther toward making his language ultra Norwegian than was wholly natural to him, and now he reversed his position so completely that he even came to hate the language movement.

During the winter of 1866-67 the young Norwegian vernacular writer, Kristofer Janson, was in Rome, and his participation in the Christmas festival at the Scandinavian Club threatened seriously to create a scandal, for he had hinted that he would make his contribution to the entertainment by reading one of his own vernacular stories, and Ibsen had made it known that in such an event he would leave the party. All through the evening, therefore, everyone sat dreading what would happen. This lasted so long that finally all thought Janson had given up his plan. But suddenly his voice was heard saying that, instead of reading anything of his own, he would tell the story "A Dangerous Courtship" (*Et Fårleg Frung*) by Bjørnson. This he did, in his bright and melodious language. It was so attractive that Ibsen forgot his anger and stayed to listen, and everything turned out well. But we know that at bottom he was not pleased. Far from it. And he often entered upon heated arguments with Janson on the language question. On one occasion he became so angry that he threw a chair after his opponent with the exclamation, "You confounded *siril*!"¹ The matter was made still worse when his wife took sides with Janson. "Yes, of course," cried Ibsen, "you, too, are a *siril*!"

Those who associated with him in Rome at this time often

¹ *Siril* is the nickname applied by the people of Bergen to the fishermen and peasants in the surrounding country.

both saw and felt his bad humor. One might have expected that the great success of *Brand* would have moderated the anger within him. But sufficient time had not yet passed since he was fairly bursting with anger, and he did not readily forget. He was still nursing the vexation he had gone through at the time when he published *Love's Comedy*, and even late in 1867 he bridled at the memory of how the comic paper *Vikingen* had made sport of him more than four years earlier. He called it being "slandered" in a "scurrilous paper." With equal care he nursed his political anger. We are told that in 1867 he would become white with anger when he spoke of how the Germans had treated Denmark, and of how Norway and Sweden had deserted the Danes. His own countrymen he never designated by any other name than "the scoundrels." He hated the Swedes for the slackness of their politics, which harmonized so poorly with their boasting of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. "Keep still, you make me sick!" he cried, striking the table, if anyone tried to say a good word for them. And as late as in 1868 he wrote that the worst thing at home was the "flirtation with the Swedes."

He now lived in far better circumstances than during his first two years in Rome. During that time he had too often been compelled to wear threadbare clothes with holes under his coat sleeves, and though he pretended not to care, he had been distressed by the fact that his poverty was thus evident to all. Now he could buy fine clothes and attire himself in proper style. Yet he felt a need to guard his social standing, and was always afraid that someone should slight him. If anything occurred that might be interpreted to mean that he or his household were not given

the same consideration as others—if, for instance, something went wrong with an invitation—he flared up and would not let the offense pass unreprieved. His pride was developed in an excessive degree. At a certain banquet in the Scandinavian Club someone proposed a toast to the committee that had looked after the food and wine. It happened to be Ibsen and another man, but Ibsen rose and, stamping his foot on the floor, said “My health shall not be drunk on the ground that I am a member of the food committee.”

It was but natural that he should know his own worth. He had struggled so long to find himself that it must give a sense of exaltation to get the measure of his own ability. Yet the feeling was so new that it brought insecurity and led to exaggeration. With perfect seriousness he would speak to one of his friends in Rome about how he would remain down there and “dictate to them all at home.” He often said that he did not write only for the immediate future, but for all eternity, and when one of his friends answered him by remarking that in a thousand years even the greatest men would probably be forgotten, Ibsen was quite beside himself. “Get away from me with your metaphysics. If you rob me of eternity, you rob me of everything.” He was in constant apprehension of anything that might terminate his work as a writer, such as illness or accident. Therefore he never ventured out on dangerous mountain or boat trips, and it was not merely in fun when he said “What if a tile should land on one’s head!”

He was especially sensitive after drinking a pint or more of wine. Then his irritability would often break out at almost nothing, and people who were entirely innocent were sometimes made

to suffer. But even at such times there was evident in him an underlying need for warmth and love. If, in a group of boon companions, he had heaped abuse upon some poor wretch, he would probably follow this by speaking gently and kindly of one who stood in need of it. On one occasion, when he had vented his wrath by pitilessly teasing a great dog inside an openwork gate, his eyes fell suddenly on two small children who had approached, and—so one of those who were present relates—“with a surprising expression of kindness and good will in his eyes he took between two of his fingers a bit of the girl’s cheek—a caress which revealed both human kindness and a desire to protect. It was an adagio after the storm.”

To the man who related this, Ibsen wrote some years later that these days were his “Roman *Sturm und Drang* period”, and the same man has described the effect of Ibsen’s inconsistencies on his associates. “His high ideals, his great pettiness in everyday matters, his joy over Italy and art, his residue of bitterness against Norway, his recently past pecuniary difficulties, and the secret desire to exert power, these things and many others that moved within him, caused him to explode in one direction or the other, and he went about among the Scandinavians like a lion whom most people were rather afraid of.”

After thus following Ibsen’s life in Rome during the first year after the publication of *Brand*, one can easily understand his lying aside all historical topics to devote himself instead to a continuation of the literature of indignation and chastisement begun in *Brand*. Yet his anger now was expressed in an altogether different form. Angry and impatient though he continued to be, he was now farther removed from the things that had worked so

powerfully on him and roused his fury. He no longer went about merely seeing red. There was going on within his spirit a transformation of a kind that is not uncommon.

It is often true that, even when the hottest flame of anger subsides, the agitation it has roused in the soul does not therefore die down. On the contrary, anger sets in motion abilities and powers which may otherwise lie bound or dormant deep within us. Anger releases and awakens a new desire for mental activity. It becomes a creative power because it breaks through old inhibitions, he who is quiet becomes lively, he who is timid becomes brave, and all the energies of the spirit are set vibrating more rapidly.

It was exactly this that happened to Ibsen. In *Brand* he had created a chastiser of the hypocrisy and the spirit of compromise in the Norwegian people, and thus set up the exact opposite of the Danish *Adam Homo*, but now he began to laugh at the pettiness of his people, and became desirous to create the Norwegian counterpart to the Danish "Adam," the Norwegian Peer, at once a type and a caricature of his people. He would no longer thunder and scold, but mock and ridicule. It was Ibsen's laughter that found an outlet.

This laughter had been heard often in *Love's Comedy*, and even in *Brand* it had not been entirely absent. One need only recall the manner in which the Dean is portrayed in the last act, to detect that Ibsen has been secretly laughing as he wrote. But only in *Peer Gynt* was his laughter given free rein. Here, too, there are times when his wrath appears stark and bitter, but for the most part it is transfused with the bold and wanton joy

that comes of feeling that strength wells up within one Not in pain this time, but in delight, the poet plied his whip

How did he find the "hero" who was to personify all the hollow boasting which he thought characterized the Norwegians? The type was suggested in Norwegian folk legends, and it was not difficult for Ibsen, the collector of legends, to discover him Perhaps he had heard of him directly while traveling in Gudbrandsdalen At any rate the man was named and described in Asbjørnsen's *Norwegian Fairy Tales and Folk Legends* in the collection of 1847, which just now, at the close of 1866, appeared in a new edition A certain man of Sel, Anders Ulsvollen, had told Asbjørnsen about him "That Peer Gynt was a queer fellow," said Anders "He was a spinner of yarns and a teller of tales that certainly would have amused you He always claimed that he himself had taken part in all the stories which people said had happened in olden days"

Ibsen found it amusing that such a person should be an historical character, and according to Asbjørnsen he was said to have lived only two or three generations ago Later research has attempted to show that the true Peer Gynt lived as far back as in the seventeenth century, but there is at least nothing historical in what the folk legends have told about him

Whatever may or may not be true of the historical Peer Gynt, he was but the small theme about which Ibsen built his rich imaginative structure The legends about Peer Gynt were but ordinary romantic stories and fairy tales, the only thing that stood out as peculiar to them being the story of the great Boyg of Atnedalen, an incident which did become a main symbol for

Ibsen, and which was among the things that nourished his creative imagination. At bottom he was glad that the sources did not give too much information about Peer. "I did not have much to build my drama on," he wrote to Hegel, "but I have had all the more freedom in my work." Around the Gudbrandsdal hunter, Peer Gynt, he gathered, one after another, the characteristics of the Norwegian racial temperament, thus re-making him into the truly Norwegian Peer.

The thing that seemed to him the fundamental characteristic in this genuine Norwegian was the damnable impulse to lie his way out of the demands and difficulties of life, a characteristic which Ibsen hated from the bottom of his heart. But the thing that explained and indeed gave something of expiation to the lie, was the riotous imagination from which it grew up, an imagination which one might laugh at and which one was almost compelled to like.

The character of the Norwegian Peer, therefore, became altogether different from that of the Danish Adam Homo, not at all the prosaic everyday temperament of the Dane, not merely a low and mean charlatan, but a wanton madcap of a poet, a fellow who at least could dream greatly, and who had sufficient ability for achievement, but who constantly lost himself in flights of fancy.

It was Ibsen's own character that was reflected in this man. He had so often dreamed that he would do something really great, had perhaps spoken of it, too. He thought that he had in him the qualities of intellectual leadership, but year after year had slipped away from him, and he had noticed how people sneered and whispered behind his back until it scorched his very

being He had wished that he might go about unseen, or he had tried to deaden the pain with something "strong", for he himself could not get beyond mere talk

Recently, while writing *Brand*, he had felt as if he were taking part in strife and action, and there had been a sense of jubilation within him Writing this drama gave an outlet to the thoughts that tormented his soul Now, afterwards, it seemed to him that he had merely evaded the struggle and the call to action, it appeared to him, as he wrote in a letter, that *Brand* was "wholly and thoroughly an æsthetic work without a trace of anything else" He had written a drama, not performed a deed "*Brand*," Arne Garborg once wrote, "is ideally what Kierkegaard wanted the man of his day to be in reality Herein lies the way of escape The absolute ethical demand is translated into æstheticism, thereby its sting is broken" But the sting remained in Ibsen, and tormented him Therefore he again felt the desire to search and chastise himself, and it was by means of self dissection that he created Peer Gynt

He admitted this openly in a speech in 1874, in which he gave an account of what he had written during the last ten years everything had been lived through within him He had, for instance in *Brand*, built on things great and fair, to which his soul in its strongest moments had attained But he had also written of the opposite things, which to his own eyes must appear as dregs and grounds in his soul "Indeed, gentlemen," he said, "no one can artistically represent that for which he has not to a certain extent, and at least on some occasions, found the model in himself And where is the man among us who has not now and then felt and recognized in himself a contradiction be-

tween words and actions, between will and task, between life and teaching? And who among us has not, at least on certain occasions, been egoistically sufficient unto himself, and, half apprehensively and half in good faith, has glossed over his attitude, both in his own eyes and in those of others?" He might as well have said, quoting his own play

Blood's never so thin as all that,

One cannot but feel one's akin to Peer Gynt

Once, fifteen years earlier, he had created a character who thus evaded the seriousness of life and made of it a mere play of words and imagination. It was the romantic poet, Julian Paulsen in *St John's Night*. Ibsen had written from without rather than from within this Julian, and had portrayed him satirically. Now the feeling that he shared responsibility and blame forced itself upon him. It was even more evident in the first version of the new drama than in the final form—in such lines as these

There is something unpleasant, a mystery

In the sharing of responsibility

In this first version we are also given more clearly to understand what kind of responsibility it was that weighed upon him. It was exactly the thing of which he had complained two years earlier in the poem "To the Partners in Guilt"—the self delusion of national romanticism. Therefore the great feast in the hall of the mountain king was first opened by all the trolls singing "For Norway, the Birthplace of Heroes." Ibsen had himself enjoyed this song. It was one of the few that he knew, and year after year he had written poems to the same tune, songs in memory of the forefathers, for the Seventeenth of May, and for other festivals. In *Andhrumner* (1851) he had dealt severely

with the "national tinsel finery" of the musical drama *The Home of the Fairy*, which found its climax in the old boastful song Now he chastised himself for the sins of the intervening period by making the song a symbol of the most narrow minded nationalism

He had other sins to confess It seemed to him now that he had never viewed life with the proper seriousness, that he had always "gone roundabout" There might be something of worth in such evasion, too, he remembered things from his Glimstad days that had left stains in his soul, making him feel "befouled and disgraced" It was not only fear that afterwards held him back—it seemed a sacrilege to "Go in with that troll rabble after me still" Yet he knew that it was true as Brand had said

*"Though you give all, and life retain,
I tell you that your gift is vain"*

Now he made it Peer Gynt's worst failing that he fled from responsibility and obeyed the command of the Boyg "Go round about"

While Ibsen thus dissected himself, while Peer Gynt gradually took living shape in his mind, memory after memory arose within him and added trait upon trait to the new dramatic creation

He remembered his father, old Knud Ibsen of Skien, whose wild speculations and uncontrolled spending when the times seemed favorable, had been the very first experience that life

² I may mention a detail which perhaps gives quite external evidence that his thoughts went back thither The poor fellow Mads Moen from whom Peer Gynt in the drama steals the bride has been given the name of a sheriff in one of the western Nedenes districts about 1840 It is possible that this was the very sheriff who collected the moneys for the support of the son born to Ibsen there

had given him of how the imagination may overpower judgment and the sense of reality. He made of Peer Gynt's father an equally reckless and light hearted speculator.

He remembered his mother, Marichen Ibsen, whom, according to his own testimony, he portrayed in Åse, the mother of Peer Gynt, certainly "with necessary exaggerations." In reality we know nothing of his mother that corresponds wholly with the temperament of Åse, it is chiefly the never failing love of motherhood that forms the bond between them. Yet there may be an underlying memory from childhood in the fact that Ibsen lets Peer Gynt relate how his mother sat by the bedside "and sang many a lilt and lay" and played at fairy tales with him. Perhaps Ibsen in his childhood had likewise been nourished by fairy tales and rhymes.

He remembered the great dreamer and restless experimenter who had once taken him into the service of national romanticism, Ole Bull. As soon as Bull had the Norwegian Theater in Bergen well started, he left it for a new undertaking, in the spring of 1852 he had gone to America to found a Norwegian ideal community there, Oleana. Ditmar Meidell has described with gay exaggeration the Eldorado dreams aroused by Ole Bull in those who wished to accompany him, and the well known song about "Oleana" has kept the memory alive down to our own times. The outcome was sad enough, Ole Bull expended all his means, and his colony was a total failure. Ibsen clearly had this ill founded experiment in mind when he let Peer Gynt dream of his empire, "Gyntiana." There can be no doubt that the national visionary, Ole Bull, helped to contribute material for Peer the Norwegian.

In addition, there appeared to Ibsen's memory a visionary of an altogether different sort, a politician and member of the Storting who had been an inexhaustible source of fun to all the *Andhrimmer* friends in 1851, and especially gratifying to the ironic sense of A. O. Vinje—the lawyer F. G. Lerche, radical and national, yet not a dreamer like Ole Bull, but a man who involuntarily took the products of his own brain to be truth itself. It was of him Vinje said that he made "stating the facts" another term for "lying", and just therein lay his quality of genius. He told the truth, but "in a free artistic translation" so that it was entirely transformed. This characteristic of his harmonized wonderfully well with the Peer Gynt of the legends.

At the same time Ibsen was thinking of A. O. Vinje himself—not the sensitive, double visioned doubter, but the irrepressible wit who plunged himself, time and again, from one fit of laughter into another—the undying Proteus spirit which in variably returned in a new form and with new hopes. Ibsen's "Hollander" friends did not hesitate a minute in recognizing Vinje in Peer Gynt, and Ibsen had indeed utilized in his new Norwegian hero a special characteristic of Vinje's—the childish self delight which appeared in his frequent quoting of his own remarks and verses.

Thus many things and many persons were mingled to form Peer the Norwegian, and everything could indeed be combined into one single personality because its life proceeded from genuine Norwegian imagination, from the Norwegian folk lore. During the time that Peer Gynt was taking form in Ibsen's imagination, the author veritably lived in the world of Norwegian legend, and the drama of Peer came to teem and swarm with

subjects and traits from all sorts of fairy tales and legends, seldom so that they are palpably taken from one tale or another, nearly always so that they have given impetus to new growth and new creation in the author's mind. All this had not only the effect of making *Peer* deeply and intimately Norwegian, but it filled the drama about him with a brilliance and sparkle of fresh, playful poetry to which there is no equal in any other of Ibsen's works.

He was unusually high spirited and happy, indeed exhilarated, at the time that he wrote *Peer Gynt*. It was at Christmas time in 1866, or at the beginning of the new year, 1867, that the new drama became clear to him and took on a firm outline, and he began immediately the work of planning and constructing. He expected to have it finished early in the summer. But even then he wrote "It grows while in preparation", and indeed he was barely able to put the first two acts into somewhat satisfactory form during the first four or five months. It was still a period of ferment and growth. But when a part of May had passed, and the heat of summer had come into the air, he left Rome and settled on the island of Ischia outside of Naples. There he lived for three months in the little town of Casamiciola, on the north side of the island, close beneath the old volcano, Epomeo, and here he was able to complete the first three acts of *Peer Gynt* and to make considerable progress with the last two.

It proved to be an exceedingly hot summer, but Ibsen worked as well as ever, despite the heat. It became evident now, and he was often to experience it later, that summer was the best working time for him. The heat which left other people wilted and exhausted, so that they could hardly force themselves to do

anything, had precisely the opposite effect on him, filling him with enthusiasm and power. He was like the serpent which becomes more active as the heat grows more intense, and which can then spit out its venom with the greatest force. He felt stronger than ever before. "Now I shall work," he said to the young Danish author, Vilhelm Bergsøe, when he arrived at Ischia. "I feel like a rearing stallion that is just about to leap!" Again he worked both forenoon and afternoon. In the first part of July a fierce sirocco brought a dry and heavy atmosphere, with a heat which rose to above a hundred degrees day after day. But Ibsen was in fine spirits and kept on working. "Ha, it will be a gay comedy," he said to Bergsøe just at this time, and, borrowing a phrase from Gert Wesphaler, he added "There is, gadzooks, no loose talk or absurd language in it." He was never at any other time so full of Holberg's jocular phraseology as he was during this summer. It was now that he truly and joyfully took over his office as Norwegian "State Satirist."

He came to move away from Ischia somewhat abruptly. One night in the middle of August he was shaken by a slight earthquake. People on the island gave no heed to it, it was a mere tremor, they said. But Ibsen took it more seriously, and the following day he moved away from the island. In a way he was proved to be right in taking the matter as possibly serious, for a few years later, in 1883, Casamicciola was completely destroyed by an earthquake. In 1867 it amounted to no more than a scare. But Ibsen settled in Sorrento, the coast town with its magnificent situation on the mainland, and here he lived for two months, writing the last two acts of *Peer Gynt*. He was not free from anxiety here either. There was an epidemic of cholera in Naples,

and at one time he even thought that his wife had contracted the disease. But the scare soon passed, and otherwise he was during this period as full of energy and joy in his work as he had been at Ischia.

Peer Gynt bears evident marks of the gay and wanton spirit in which it was written. Never in any other work did Ibsen adhere so little to a rigid and definite plan. Indeed it was a part of his plan to give the imagination free play. He felt a desire to move freely within an easy and flexible form, and he "slapped in" both this and that "as caprices"—to use his own words.

Peer Gynt, like *Brand*, took the form of a "dramatic poem," but Ibsen has never written anything less dramatic. This time it came natural to him to show us the entire life of his hero, from youth to old age, he could not be satisfied to let his character unfold itself in a single dramatic conflict.

True enough, the first three acts are bound together, not only in a firm plot of action, but still more in an inner psychological tension. Here we still meet a Peer for whom there is choice and hope. Even though he dreams and lies his way out of everything serious, we see that he has stuff in him for a life of will and responsibility. He has still the power to love, that is, he can think of others, can be willing to sacrifice himself. For here, as well as in *Brand*, it is true that

To be oneself is to slay oneself

Therefore he can be saved both from the Dovre King and from the Boyg. In the one instance his thought goes at last to his mother, and in the other to Solveig, and thus he finds his escape. But each time he has grown weaker, not stronger. From the Dovre-King he has learned "To thyself be enough", and from

the Boyg "Go roundabout" Therefore, when the crucial test comes, he fails He flees from the responsibility of taking up the struggle of life together with Solveig, and he drives away with play his mother's sorrow in death and her fear of hell With that he has torn the soul out of himself, he has no longer anything to give to others, he lives only in self love, lives on lies and dreams

Thus the strife within him is concluded in the first three acts When we meet him again in the fourth act, he has already lived a whole life on this basis It is always dangerous for a drama to extend over too long a period of time, an entire transformation of character may thus remain outside the plot Here thirty years pass between the third act and the fourth, Peer was twenty years old, and now he is fifty The interval seems even greater, as the first three acts are so closely unified The last two are not in the same way bound together In fact there is, after all, nothing lost in the interval, Peer is the same through all this time

Ibsen makes him emigrate to America, gathering a fortune over there, and if we should venture to imagine his way of living among the shipping men of Charleston, we might think of him in the likeness of Sinclair Lewis's Babbitt, that prosaic and Americanized edition of the same universal type, the man who conforms to surrounding society, extirpating his own individuality, and shirking all kinds of personal moral responsibilities Such was Peer already when arriving there The fate of his soul was already determined, it is a mere external history that is left out, and the last two acts serve only to bring him to the judgment and catastrophe

That is to say, Ibsen utilizes them for various sorts of "ca

prices"—for slashing away at the Norwegian language movement, at the Swedish worship of the past and politics of fine phrases, at the English American business morality, at historical philosophy, and at various other things. But all this serves to reveal to us the seamy sides of the "Gyntish I," and thus to bring us closer and closer to the judgment. At the same time Peer is lifted out of the setting in which he at first was placed, he becomes not only a Norwegian type, but a symbol of all human self limitation and self-deception. "Norwegian by birth, but cosmopolitan in spirit." The understanding grew quite naturally in Ibsen's mind, that the narrow nationalism which he condemned in the Norwegians was in reality not national at all, but rather made an end of true national life by killing the soul, just as "to thyself be enough" killed the true self in man. It was thus a result of the development of Peer Gynt's life that he became universally human—a man without a soul. All the more heavily the judgment must fall upon him, since it was a universal law of life that he had sinned against.

Then he meets his judge the Button moulder. Quite externally this meeting reminds one strongly of the "apocalyptic comedy" by J. L. Heiberg, *A Spirit After Death* (1840). Certain thoughts in the two dramas are closely associated: the soul in Heiberg is condemned not for great sins but for ordinary bourgeois paltriness, it had never cared for the things of the spirit, but had been content to live for material good and had never striven for genuinely personal existence. This draws a clear line from *A Spirit After Death*, through *Adam Homo*, on to *Peer Gynt*. The line is raised a step upward for each of these works. In Heiberg it is still chiefly a philosophic æsthetic de-

mand that is made the test for the soul Paludan Muller makes it an ethical demand, and in Ibsen this ethical demand is sharpened to such intensity that it bores itself burning into the soul he who does not follow his calling, forfeits his right to life itself He is worth no more than the chaff which the Almighty throws into the fire

One may say that this thought could never have become so powerful a demand upon life and character had not Søren Kierkegaard's fiery spirit made an issue of it, as he did, yet it is also true that Ibsen succeeded in giving it a searing quality which rendered it the very question of life or death to every man The Button moulder whom he made the judge and accuser, half humorous though he may seem, still moves in an atmosphere of ghastly horror much worse than either Mephistopheles in Heiberg or *advocatus diaboli* in Paludan Muller

Ibsen's Button moulder was formed from one of the memories of his own childhood In his boyhood days he himself had done some button moulding, and we can imagine that he sometimes sat pondering the horror of being lost in the molten mass Now this picture returned to him, and became a symbol of the wasted life which is blotted out A person like Peer Gynt deserved nothing else

Then, suddenly, we are confronted with the unexpected event that Peer is acquitted and saved It comes upon us quite as abruptly as the fact that Peer's antithesis, the sternly idealistic Brand, is doomed Brand had directed his whole will toward the one great object to sacrifice himself, and to be himself fully and truly Yet he was not accepted Peer had sneaked away from all the true content of the demand, and had but mouthed the

empty words in loose talk and boasting And yet he was for given in the end, because a woman had lived on her love for him The thing must seem unreasonable, even unjust, or—as a reviewer wrote when the drama came out—"equally absurd from a Christian as from an ordinary psychological standpoint" It seemed plainly as though Ibsen wished to vindicate the thought at which he had permitted Brand to scoff—that love could carry one through the worst self abandonment and loss of will

*If with wide open eyes he err,
Let him but love,—there's safety there!*

Peer Gynt was precisely such a fellow, and now Ibsen himself let him conquer in that way!

It was but natural that the ending of the drama should direct the thought backward to *Adam Homo* Here Paludan Müller, too, had given his hero salvation because a woman could say in the judgment

In life and death this soul was my delight!

It was a thought which returned many times in all romanticism, that the woman had power to save the man *Das ewig Weibliche* which Goethe extolled, and which Peer Gynt had caricatured, was the clear thought of God, the element of innocence, in the human soul—that which raised a man up to the heights of heaven We recognize the thought in the first production of Ibsen's youth the mild Aurelia takes her own murderer, Catiline, with her into "the dwelling place of light and rest," so that the drama can close with the message to her

*All the powers of darkness you have conquered
with your love!*

The thought lives, though in other forms, in other writings by Ibsen, in *St John's Night*, in *Olaf Lofjekrans*, in *Brand*. It is not strange, therefore, that we find it again in *Peer Gynt*.

Yet I do not think Ibsen has intended to let Peer receive his salvation merely as a gift from a love inspired woman. That would indeed have been too easy. And this at least one may safely say of Ibsen: he never regarded life's problems lightly, he always tried to look even the hardest truth squarely in the eye. In the same manner as we found the final judgment in *Brand* quietly and deeply foretold in the struggle we had followed, we must seek in *Peer Gynt* for the prophecy of salvation.

In so doing we shall first recall the two earlier occasions on which Peer had been rescued from destruction. Then it had been said of him

"He was too strong. There were women behind him."

And he was strong, not only because two women—his mother and Solveig—had helped him with their love, but because he himself had—if but a little—love, true and devoted love, for them. We do not see a trace of this love when we meet Peer Gynt in Africa, then it seems as if self love has him completely in its power. And yet there is in this very fourth act one thing which the author surely has intended, or perhaps rather has intuitively felt, to be an omen of the fact that love has power to win. It is into this act, just after Peer has had his unfortunate adventure in love with Anitra and has shrugged his shoulders with the wise remark,

And women,—ah, they are a worthless crew—

that Ibsen has placed the simple, and yet so rich and hopeful song by Solveig

*But some day thou art coming, full sure I know,
And I shall be waiting, for I promised thee so*

An alert and sensitive theater manager, Ludvig Josephson, succeeded in bringing the author's thought more clearly to the fore than he himself had been able to do, for it was Josephson who had the happy inspiration, when in 1874 he prepared the play for presentation on the stage, to let this song by Solveig resound in a dream vision which Peer had. Thus it was made known that the memory of Solveig still lived in a small corner of his soul, and thus we are prepared for the fact that when Peer in the very last part of the act finds himself in a hopeless situation in the madhouse in Cairo, there again rises in him a cry to Solveig. For it is what he has been in her keeping that he remembers in the words

I was in a woman's keeping, a silver clasped book

Longing and remorse are thus still alive in him, or have at least the power to grow in him, and in the last act these are the feelings that arise more and more strongly. The "caprice" of the unknown passenger who appears to Peer in the hour of ship wreck is in reality nothing but a forewarning of the "earnestness of dread" which begins to blow in upon his soul. The idea may have come to Ibsen from the poem, "The Balloonist and the Atheist," by Paludan Muller (1852), but it penetrates far more deeply into the soul. The vital question at last takes hold of Peer, and it begets fear. It is wild despair that makes him cry out when he finds himself again in his childhood home, that he has for sale "a dream of a silver clasped book", and it is not for nothing that Ibsen lets him become "deathly pale" when he

really hears Solveig singing in the house Then he hears within himself the lament over all the things that he has *not* done

We are thoughts

Thou shouldst have thought us!

We are a watchword,

Thou shouldst have proclaimed us!

We are songs,

Thou shouldst have sung us!

We are tears

Unshed forever

We are deeds

I thou shouldst have achieved us!

And it is then that he meets the Button moulder Perhaps no other author has ever portrayed the remorse over a wasted life in words so powerfully touching as those which Ibsen gives Peer Gynt to say at the time when he no longer sees any way ahead All his life he has been careful not to burn his bridges He has always been averse to the idea of "cutting a thing short," and it is thus that he has considered himself "the master of the situation" Now he suddenly perceives that thereby he has wasted all his hopes, has struck his own name out of the book of life Vacancy yawns after him

So unspeakably poor, then, a soul can go

Back to nothingness, into the grey of the mist

*Thou beautiful earth, be not angry with me
That I trampled thy grasses to no avail
Thou beautiful sun, thou hast squandered away
Thy glory of light in an empty hut*

Now, for the first time in his life he stands face to face with "the victory that is given in dread" And now that he stands anew, for the third time, outside of Solveig's cottage, he no longer goes roundabout

Ah no this time at least

Right through, though the path may be never so strait!

Now he finds himself—finds himself in Solveig, but can find himself only because for once he meets the responsibility of life squarely A remnant of his soul he has kept all the time, and it is this that now saves him

Or perhaps it is only a dream? The last words which are sung over Peer Gynt, are the line

Sleep and dream thou, dear my boy!

Ibsen could, at least, not relinquish that dream He had given too much of himself to Peer Gynt to have the heart to let him be utterly lost And he felt too closely bound to the Norwegian people to deny them a single remaining hope in life, even though the hope was but a dream In this respect, too, Ibsen continued to be, just as Peer was, "an abominable poet"

AFTER-PAINS

IBSEN sent the first three acts of *Peer Gynt* to press while he was at Ischia, early in August, 1867. At that time he was still in the midst of planning the last two acts, and it might have seemed risky to send the first half of the drama away. In his doing so there was a youthful self-confidence which clearly shows how much Ibsen then felt himself to be on the crest of the wave. When, in the middle of September, he sent the fourth act off from Sorrento, he had to request that the list of *dramatis personæ* should not be printed yet, "as I may possibly wish to add one or two minor characters." He had no hesitation about slapping in a few more "caprices", and still another month went by before the fifth act was completed.

Then he took a vacation and rested, full of joy in the thought of his work. In the latter part of October he went on to Pompeii and Naples and saw the remarkable remains of ancient culture in those cities. From there he went to Rome, where he arrived in the midst of the excitement following the unhappy military venture which Garibaldi just then directed against the papal city. There were many difficulties, therefore, about gaining admission. Then Emperor Napoleon came to the aid of the pope, and soon everything in Rome was as usual. A little after the middle of November, Ibsen had again found a house for himself in the city.

Here he received one joyful message after another. There was the splendid essay which Georg Brandes had written about him in *Dansk Maanedsskrift*, then came a letter from his publisher saying that the first large edition of *Peer Gynt* had been sent into the market and had immediately been almost sold out, so that it would be necessary to print a new edition of 2000 copies. A few days later there was a new letter from Copenhagen, this time from Bjornstjerne Björnson, full of a gratitude so hearty and warm that it must go straight to the author's heart. "Dearest Ibsen! I am so thankful to you for *Peer Gynt*, that I do not remember any book during the years I have been an author which has so invoked my desire to give a warm handclasp for what I have warmly received."

It was a love letter pure and simple. "I cannot speak of anything these days but your drama, or think of anyone but you, and so, naturally, I must tell it to you, too. The faithfulness which I see in you (for how loyal have you not been in this book!) has done more than the book itself to win my heart, at the same time as it has captured my thoughts. I love your faithfulness to our great goals, from the Danish cause to the highest ideals. I love your wrath, I love the courage which it has armed. I love your strength, I love your roughness which, like a taste of sea air on the coast after the stuffy air of the sick room, filled my thoughts with laughter, made me eager for action, recklessly honest, so that small things became small, and great things became splendor and flame within my longing. I could resort to swearing, as if I had been speaking French too long in a salon and needed Norwegian."

Björnson could report that he had immediately sent a review

of the book home to his paper, *Norsk Folketidning*. The review was written the day after the book came out, and it hailed *Peer Gynt* as a literary masterpiece and a deed of prowess besides, with a message to every single Norwegian "*Peer Gynt* is a satire on Norwegian selfishness, illiberality, and self sufficiency, and is executed in such a way that I was not only compelled time and again to laugh uproariously, indeed, to fairly roar, but have been forced to thank in my mind (as I now do publicly) the dramatist who has done this" Bjornson did have a few words of blame for the rough verses, phrases, and images—so rough that he was not sure "if one can let all people read the book" But yet "it embraces in its details as in its entirety a stronger and braver message in all our confusion than we have ever had before" Bjornson had certainly an eye for the dramatic coherence of the work as well, he was the only one among contemporaries, and for that matter the only one in a long period, who saw how Ibsen had built up *Peer's* right to win salvation

Ibsen had reason to feel gratified and happy. He saw how his work was understood and appreciated, he believed that he would accomplish exactly what he had intended with it, and he sat down and wrote to Bjornson a letter full of gratitude, for "to be understood makes one unspeakably thankful"

But—the letter was never sent. Ibsen tore it to pieces and threw it away, for even before it could be sent off, he had laid hands on the Copenhagen paper, *Fædrelandet*, with the review that Clemens Petersen had written about *Peer Gynt*, and he boiled with an anger which he could not control.

Clemens Petersen had now for ten years been reviewer for *Fædrelandet*, and had during that time made himself the lead

ing literary critic in Scandinavia *Fædrelandet* was still a powerful paper in Denmark, for it continued to be the chief organ of the liberal intellectual circles in that country, and it was, practically speaking, the only Danish paper which at that time was read in Norway and Sweden. When we now, sixty or seventy years later, read the book reviews that Clemens Petersen wrote for the paper, they often seem to us peculiarly dogmatic and schoolmaster like, without genuine sense for real literature. But at that time there was revolution and emancipation in them, they broke away from the formal æstheticism of Heiberg, and placed first and foremost the question: Is the work genuine? Is it born of a deep inner need in the author?

Ibsen thought that he himself had derived benefit from these reviews, they had to some extent helped to direct him away from the making of verses, and toward writing only that which he really felt impelled to write. True enough, Clemens Petersen had shown little understanding of the nature of Ibsen's genius, this had been glaringly evident in his judgment of works as personal as *Love's Comedy* and *The Pretenders*. He had looked at Ibsen through Bjornsonian eyes, from the days of his youth he had attached himself to Björnson in friendship and admiration, and he expected a future literature in the spirit of Björnson. *Brand* had impressed him, that was clear enough, even though he held, like Björnson, that the work was not completed, that it had "more idea than image," and, he wrote, "therefore the true reality in the development breaks down." But Ibsen was pleased with the friendly and respectful tone of the article, as he had been pleased with the mere fact that Petersen had cared to write fully about *Love's Comedy*. And he was far from

blind to what his books gained by the fact that such a powerful man took them up for discussion. He had frankly written to Petersen beforehand and asked him to be friendly toward *Brand* and when he had begun work on *Peer Gynt*, he wrote again, partly with the purpose of thanking him, partly with a thought of the future. "I hope that in my new work you shall perceive that I have taken an important step forward."

Clemens Petersen endorsed the view that in certain respects there was a forward step in *Peer Gynt*. "There is more of humor, more true freedom of spirit, and less violence, less conscious effort, in this drama than in *Brand*. It has proceeded more naturally from the author's disposition, and gives a fresher, more even, and therefore a more poetic impression." But here his entire theory of poetry interfered, and he declared "Neither *Brand* nor *Peer Gynt* is true poetry." Why? Because the "ideal is lacking." It is difficult to understand what he could really mean by this, and at least to Ibsen it must have seemed quite shamefully unjust. Even worse it must have seemed when Petersen went on about "the lack of clear sequence in the plot development and the lack of perfect integrity in the execution." This last amounted to a denial of Ibsen's artistic honesty. Petersen saw in *Peer Gynt* nothing but an elaborate allegory, the persons in the drama had not attained full and living form, and the allegory itself had failed, becoming often an outright "intellectual swindle." The concluding criticism was that the book was simply the Danish *Corsair* (*Corsaren*) of Goldschmidt, in Norwegian form, that is to say, less witty and refined.

Following the greeting Ibsen had recently received from Bjornson, this review came upon him like a thunderbolt. During

the time when he was most actively at work on his book, he had felt that it could make no difference to him what other people said or thought. It happened one day at Ischia that Vilhelm Bergsøe read to him a review in which Clemens Petersen with biting sarcasm had made hash of Bergsøe's first collection of poetry. Ibsen and Bergsøe had climbed the volcano Epomeo together, and there they sat, emptying one pint of glorious wine after another, while Bergsøe read. Ibsen was boyishly elated. "Your health, Jacob!"¹ he cried for every emphatic assertion in the paper. At last he said, "I don't think the man himself can write, but to inform others how to do something which he himself is not equal to—that he always manages deuced well. Let me have that paper, and I will show you what should be done with it." Thereupon they began the descent. They were not quite steady on their feet, and strayed into an avalanche of stones on their way, so that their lives were endangered. But when they reached Casamiciola, Ibsen first brushed his clothes carefully, then took out *Fædrelandet*, rolled the paper into a cornet, and said, "Now we will blow a tune for criticism." Setting the paper to his lips he crossed the market place, blowing the horn with all his might. That was all the respect he showed for Clemens Petersen at that time.

But now he became furiously angry, and an hour had not passed since he read the review of *Peer Gynt* in *Fædrelandet* before he sat down to write a new letter to Bjørnson. "What is at the bottom of this deviltry that on every occasion comes and plants itself between us? It is as if the personal devil cast his

¹ Jacob Shoemaker, the name of a character in Holberg's *Jeppe of the Hill*, was Ibsen's nickname for Bergsøe.

shadow on us" He made Björnson share the responsibility for what Clemens Petersen had written "If I were in Copenhagen, and if anyone there stood as close to me as Clemens Petersen does to you, I would beat him to a jelly rather than let him commit such a deliberate crime against truth and justice" For, to Ibsen, Petersen's review of the book was a lie—a lie even more in what was omitted than in what was said, and he held that "this article will some time scar and burn his soul" With his whole soul he rose in rebellion against the judgment which was here passed upon his work "My book *is* poetry, and if it is not, it shall be The conception of poetry shall in our land, in Norway, come to adapt itself to the book" That Petersen would not acknowledge this appeared to him like breaking faith with the holiest dictates of conscience But he would not admit discouragement

"I am glad for the injury that has been done to me, there is a divine help and dispensation in it, for I feel that my powers grow with my anger If there is to be war, then let it come! If I am not a poet, I have nothing to lose I shall try my luck as photographer My contemporaries up there I shall portray, individually, person by person, as I have done with the language agitators, I shall not spare the child in its mother's womb, not the thought or mood behind the word, in any soul that deserves the honor of being included"

"What I here put together," he concluded, "is undoubtedly quite incoherent, but the sum and substance of it is I *will* not be an antiquary or a geographer, I *will* not further train my abilities for the philosophy of Monrad, in short, I will by no means follow good advice" He wanted to be himself

This was the ninth of December. Then he slept on the letter, and the next day he wrote a postscript "in cold blood." He had not cooled to any great degree, however. He was not quite so indignant with Björnson any longer, but he was sure that every one at home would say that it was Björnson who had wished to attack him indirectly through Clemens Petersen, and that their friends would array themselves in hostile groups. He himself would prefer to keep peace with Björnson, but he threatened him with war now as he had done the previous day.

"I do not yield voluntarily, and Herr Clemens Petersen can not put me to flight, it is too late. He may possibly bring about my withdrawal from Denmark, but in that case I intend to change something more than publisher. Do not underestimate my friends and my following in Norway. The party whose paper has given room to injustice towards me shall then feel that I do not stand alone. Beyond a certain limit I stop at nothing, and if I only take care, as I can do, to couple this inordinate violence of mood with cold bloodedness in the choice of means, my enemies shall be made to feel that if I cannot build up, I am quite competent to tear down."

His anger began to subside after he had sent this letter. He anxiously asked himself whether he had not, after all, been unfair to Björnson, and he did not have a peaceful day. He went about in dread lest the bitter struggle which he had expected and promised should become a reality. Everything was black within him and without.

Björnson took the letter in a spirit altogether different from what might have been expected. He was not at all angry. He knew himself to be perfectly innocent, he had, in fact, often

quarreled with Clemens Petersen about what constituted poetry, and had told him outright that his judgment of *Peer Gynt* was unjust. All this Björnson wrote to Ibsen in a friendly way, and told him that in the struggle about *Peer Gynt* he would stand back to back with Ibsen. But what he feared was the uncontrollable fury which could make Ibsen set out to establish new aims in his life and authorship, merely because of such a newspaper article. Björnson, with his quiet strength and his demand for balance, thought there was something unhealthy in such swinging between extremes. "If this is something physical," he wrote, "you shall leave Rome and the South without delay, for only two or three such attacks are enough to mark you, as if by the devil's own claw. If it is something psychic as well, then pray to you! Lord and Saviour, you strong truth seeking soul! Pray with the earnestness that God has given you, pray, so that it penetrates the cloud-curtain of your own good sense, pray, so that you become as a child, for then you will be just toward us and confident in yourself." But first and last he bade Ibsen control himself and refuse to be provoked into anger and defiance.

This answer reached Ibsen on Christmas Day, and made him heartily glad. "A more blessed greeting I could not have received in all the world." He was relieved of the anxiety with which he had tormented himself. But he assured Björnson that he need not worry about these attacks of anger. "They are nothing morbid, either in one sense or the other." He wrote back and thanked Björnson for his friendship, promising that he would soon send a long letter again.

But—ten years were to pass before he was to write another

word to Björnson. The bitterness aroused by Petersen's review came back upon him, after all. He could not get rid of the feeling that Björnson, in spite of everything that he said, still tried to drive him into other paths than those he wished to go, and he noticed so many reservations in the praise that Björnson gave him, reservations in exactly the direction that Clemens Petersen took. Their differences appeared outside of their authorship also.

In this last letter Björnson had asked Ibsen to agree that they should not accept decorations from the King, but Ibsen would by no means reject such decorations any more than he would reject other honors, for it would seem hypocrisy toward himself. We may believe that Björnson made no effort to conceal his disappointment at this answer, and Ibsen certainly had friends who hastened to report such things to him. Distrust gnawed on him, he was again stirring up excitement within himself. About his mood early in 1868 he wrote the next year in a letter: "I was at that time in the humor of a wild beast, and had various reasons to be so."

It happened, in the case of *Pærl Gynt*, that Ibsen was better satisfied with the reception of the book in Norway than in Denmark. There appeared in both *Morgenbladet* and *Aftenbladet* extended reviews, running in two issues of both papers, which strongly pointed out all the treasures of poetry and thought in the drama. The reviewer for *Aftenbladet*, Fr. Baetzmann, protested against the attempt made by Danish critics to "shut an author up in a definite stall." But, true enough, he prophesied at the same time that people would grow tired of all this controversial poetry and would begin to wish for "something less

polemic and nihilistic, something more directly beautiful and æsthetically satisfying ”

In Denmark this wish had already found expression Georg Brandes wrote in *Dagbladet* a review in which he classified *Peer Gynt* with a group of “those literary productions, appearing more and more frequently among us, which have it as their object to represent humanity, morally, from its reverse side, and upon whose scapegoat of a hero all human contemptibility is piled ” The particular form of contemptibility which Ibsen here wished to portray and chastise, “cowardly egoism in the form of self deception and falsehood,” led Brandes back to thoughts in Goethe and Kierkegaard, and he pointed out how that which H. E. Schack in *The Visionaries* (1857) had described as sickness, was by Ibsen condemned as sin But Brandes was tired of this “If the old, pretty rule of French romanticism—‘The ugly is the beautiful’—were actually true, then *Peer Gynt* would be a thing of beauty, but if this rule is a trifle doubtful, then Ibsen’s new work is a total failure ” He willingly admitted that the book contained “great beauties” and stated some “great truths”, but “beauties and truths have far less value than Beauty and Truth in the singular, and Ibsen’s book is neither beautiful nor true, the contempt of humanity and the self hatred on which it is constructed are a poor foundation on which to build artistic works ” Therefore Brandes cries “What wormwood tainted joy can he find in thus besmirching human nature! Surely, this endeavor must some time or other come to an end We have had enough, and the thing should stop ”

Such a judgment must infuriate Ibsen On the whole, he was

better pleased with the outcry that came from some national groups in Norway, particularly from the language controversialists. He had intended to strike hard at all nationalists striving for isolation, he had scoffed at it generally in the meeting with the King of the Dovre Trolls, by means of the slogan "Troll, to thyself be—enough!" And the language controversy he had caricatured by means of Huhu in the madhouse in Cairo. Now Bjornson may have been right in holding that the true isolationists were the reactionaries who just at that time gained power in *Morgenbladet*. It could not truthfully be said that national politics and language movement under such leaders as Johan Sverdrup, J. E. Sars, and A. O. Vinje closed the land to foreign culture. But it did not occur to the men in *Morgenbladet* to consider themselves especially national, and it was the other group that took, and had to take, the satire in *Peer Gynt* to heart. Kristofer Janson appeared in *Aftenbladet* with one or two angry contributions which closed with the wish that Ibsen would soon "tire of spitting and scolding from his chimney corner." Janson could with justice show that Ibsen had quite obsolete notions of what the language agitators sought to attain. They by no means had the intention of bringing back the dead Old Norse, what they wanted was to set up the living vernacular. Yet the truth was that Ibsen, at least in Bergen, had known language agitators who wished to get as far back to the Old Norse as possible. Not a few antiquated forms were still in use in the written vernacular, and even a man like Vinje would sometimes complain of the dissolution which had come upon the Old Norse language. If Huhu was a caricature, he did strike home to at least one side of the language controversy, and the best proof was that

so many cried out at the blow Ibsen was prepared for this, but it aroused the love of battle in him. It was pleasant for him to note that there was power in his lash, and he felt that his strength was growing.

Thus there was commotion and struggle about *Peer Gynt*, and, like *Brand*, Ibsen's new work gave a wealth of phrases to Norwegian speech, humorous phrases which are in use every where. *Peer Gynt* struck root in Norwegian sentiment. He became to the Norwegian people exactly what he was to Ibsen: a pet child and an ugly brat at one and the same time. And he became this because there was wafted about him such a fragrance of poetry. For there *was* genuine poetry in *Peer Gynt*.

THE POLITICAL PHRASEMONGER

IN his review of *Peer Gynt*, Björnson wrote "It has proved true, what we sensed before, that the closer Henrik Ibsen approaches the satiric comedy (or perhaps more properly the pure comedy) the closer he comes to his true genius" He said the same thing to Ibsen himself "If you need rest, then play about in a satiric comedy That is where your central ability lies, there you need but crook your fingers, and it writes itself for you" And Ibsen answered "Your advice that I write a comedy for the stage, I believe I shall follow, I have myself been thinking of the same thing"

We may surmise that this was the thought hidden in his threat to make himself a "photographer" and to picture contemporary life at home in the same way in which he had recently used the language agitators, but we know nothing of how far the plans had yet progressed in his mind, or even if he had within him any clear idea of the new comedy We may at least say that he did not yet have any thought of creating a comedy hero who should borrow truths from Björnson himself

In February, 1868, he wrote to his publisher, Hegel "My next work will presumably be a play for the theater, and no long time will pass, I hope, before I seriously begin working on it" But the thing that he actually did work on during the following

months, was certainly something quite different. He had before him again the old plan for a drama about Emperor Julian.

During this time, moreover, he fretted over the question of moving back to Norway, he had little Sigurd's schooling in mind. In the middle of May he began to travel northward, first to Florence, and then he settled for the summer in the Alps. In the middle of June he took up his abode in the small village of Berchtesgaden, in a corner in the extreme southeastern part of the Bavarian Alps. He missed Italy, especially the Italian climate to which he had now through four years grown accustomed. But it was beautiful enough here in the mountains, and he used the three summer months of his stay in Berchtesgaden for both long and short walking tours through the Alps. He intended, then, to spend the winter in Germany, either in Munich or in Dresden, before he finally went home to Oslo. In Munich he this time remained for only two weeks. From the beginning of October he rented quarters in Dresden, and in this city he actually came to have his abode for six or seven years. Nothing came of his going home.

While in Berchtesgaden he gave definite form to his plan for a comedy, and in Dresden he immediately went to work at writing. It was *The League of Youth* that now took shape. He thought he had the play so ready in his mind that he would have it completely worked out in three months. Actually, it took half a year before it was finished. This was partly because he could not work so hard during the winter, his blood was not so hot then. But also it was partly because he placed so much emphasis on the technique of his drama. This time he wrote for the theater, and he now wished to have the play as nearly per-

fect as possible for presentation on the stage. He made higher demands on himself now than ever before.

This might bear some relation to the fact that the new play was to be, as he wrote from Berchtesgaden, "completely realistic", and he added with a little twinkle in his eye—"as the heavy German atmosphere tends to make it." But the thing of chief importance was not that he had moved across the boundary from Italy to Germany, it was far more important that he had crossed the forty year line in his own life. He had attained a much stronger self discipline than he formerly had. The testing of conscience and soul through which he had passed during the last years had inevitably left marks in himself. It had taken the form of artistic production, of poetry, in him, but his art had, first and foremost, been a tool for his ethical will. It was natural that the demand for revolt in his soul took the form of literary production, and in moments of stern self searching he could feel as though he thereby ran away from the ethical demands of life, translating them into mere "æstheticism," into dreams and self-deception. But more and more he understood that his work was to write, that this, too, was in truth life and achievement. So he devoted his whole soul to this work, it became an ethical demand for him to hammer out every literary work with the greatest craftsmanship he could command. No "caprices" any more, but stern discipline in great things and small.

"The form I have treated with care," he wrote to Georg Brandes about his new comedy, "and have, among other things, performed the trick of getting along without a single monologue, indeed, without a single 'aside'." During this winter, 1868-69, he read Brandes's *Studies in Æstheticism*, in which

the treatise about himself was included, he read both that and other sections again and again, and he tried to learn something from the criticism. He saw more clearly than before how important it was for a dramatic writer to conceal himself, not let himself be tempted to shine on his own account, but only endeavor to let his characters live freely and fully and speak according to their own nature. He strove thus to get rid of all old stage conventions, dramatic truth became the all important thing to him. That was the ethics in his work as a literary artist.

When Ibsen emphasized, again and again, the realism in the new drama on which he was working, it was in contrast to the play of swarming fancies in all his earlier present-day dramas. But it was by no means his intention to go over to the photographic art which, in his first flare of anger after *Peer Gynt*, he had threatened to employ. Quite certainly he had here used the word "photography" in the same sense as he had understood it ten years earlier, when, in a theater report written for *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*, he satirized those who would have art "be a photographic resemblance to reality." In all that he wrote about the arts, from his *Andhrumner* days to the time he left Norway, it was always this thing he pointed out, that truth in art was by no means the same thing as reproducing everyday people and everyday life in palpable imitation, but that one must make the spectators *believe* in the truth of the drama, and that the author, as well as the actor, must raise life to a symbolic truth, so that the dramatic work should yield much more than the particular set of circumstances to which it was attached.

Yet many people were to think that the drama which Ibsen now wrote came uncomfortably close to being photography, and

indeed he took much material for it right out of the daily life which lay open to everyone. But his own intention was not to photograph. The idea shot through him while he was angry, but again it turned out that anger set his imagination in motion, and he did not write in a fit of temper. The drama he was writing proved to be controversial, and yet he would time and again report that he was working on a peaceable play. He dwelt in pure creative joy while writing, and his characters came to live independently about him.

The new drama was born almost directly of the preceding one. Its content was in reality *Peer Gynt* in politics—the great bombastic hero, the orator, who deluded both himself and others with fair and ardent words, but who at the same time always had his own interests in mind—visionary and egoist at the same time.

Ibsen himself said in a letter that he wished to “portray a disintegrated attitudinizer, generally speaking, a split personality.” And in another letter he said that many things in this hero, the lawyer Stensgård, as well as in *Peer Gynt*, “were the result of self dissection.” He felt in altogether too great a degree these fundamental characteristics in himself, and especially he was tormented by the thing which he had attributed to Stensgård in the play—“splitting of the personality.” There had never been tranquillity and harmony in his soul, there had always been within him conflict between wishes and abilities, and he had too long been in the service of wills and aims which were not his own. He had written himself away from actual life. With something of all this he made a settlement in *The League of Youth*.

It seemed a matter of course that this time Ibsen should make

the Peci Gynt type a politician, for it was in politics that he had suffered his great disappointment, and it was there he had found dishonesty and irresponsibility most rampant. In writing *Brand* in its first epic form he had therefore included a large amount of satire upon the great political platitudes, upon all the jingling phrases on which politicians subsisted. It had not been given room in the drama, but now it appeared anew.

In truth, they were old thoughts and feelings that thus came together and took shape in a new work of creative writing. In youth, he had (1851) in *Andhrumner* and perhaps in the Labor Unions' paper as well, wielded the whip to his heart's content on political orators who always carried on their lips beautiful words about government by the people and about relief for the poor, but who always deserted when there was need for action. Such things had always provoked his ire. He had even at that time written a short political comedy about such desertion, the operatic parody, *Norma, or a Politician's Love*. It had especially attacked the democratic leader, A. B. Stabell, who in the comedy had received his reward by being transformed into a minister. Besides, the satire had struck the former leader, O. G. Ueland, whose rustic wiliness now appeared again in *The League of Youth* in the character of old Lundestad. Even the name was derived from Lund parish, the home of Ueland. I think, moreover, there can be no doubt that Ibsen now again had Stabell in mind, Stabell, whom in 1851 he had compared with "one of these genuine dramatic characters" which he found mentioned in J. I. Hicberg—in reality not a character, but an absence of character, one of those "whom one must guess about rather than observe, and who finally, at the close of the drama, end up

where, judging from the beginning, one would least expect it "

We have a bit of entirely external evidence of how Ibsen, at just this time, had the *Andhrumner* days clearly in mind the printer Aslaksen in *The League of Youth* was a direct copy of the printer N T Axelsen, who had published *Andhrumner* Ibsen certainly remembered the hopes which he and his friends had held up before Axelsen, relating to their new paper, they were to "make things lively to grapple with abuses The bigwigs were to be pilloried " These words in *The League of Youth* undoubtedly point back to the time almost twenty years before, and there was an echo from that time when Aslaksen in the play answers with his melancholy words "I can't live on a good paper "

Ibsen's memory, however, went still further back His first impression of politics came from the conflict that raged in Skien and Gjerpen during the last year that he lived at home—the conflict which centered in the editor Herman Bagger He was a Dane who had moved into Gjerpen in the 1830s, and who in 1843 founded the paper *Correspondenten* in Skien, clearly with the thought of working for his own election to the Storting He attacked the leading officials in the town and the surrounding country, and the struggle brought to light among other things an old mortgage which he had transferred to himself He had made himself eligible for election by purchasing a farm in Gjerpen, but in addition to this he supplied himself with a base in Skien by taking out a tradesman's license there By means of a hard and bitter campaign he succeeded in becoming elector in 1844, but for the Storting he was given only three of the

thirty eight electoral votes for the county. Later he came to be a member of the Storting for many years, the last time in 1868-69, as member for Skien. But if he had been a radical and an agitator for freedom in the forties, he became after the Labor struggles of 1851 more and more conservative. And even in 1844 he had been told that he turned his cloak to the wind.

Many particular things in *The League of Youth* are reminiscent of this old struggle, and it seems certain that Herman Bagger had contributed to the making of Lawyer Stensgård. Therefore, too, Ibsen laid the scene of the drama in and outside of Skien. From Gjerpen he took the name Bratsberg for the old Chamberlain. In the neighboring district of Solum lay the woods "Tolleskauen," or Klosterskauen, belonging to Cappelen at Klostret, where the people of Skien early in the forties began to hold their Seventeenth of May festivals. In Skien lived Ibsen's own father, whom he now drew in Daniel Heire, the ruined speculator who kept up his courage with persiflage and satire—also a type of self deception, though of a kind different from that of Stensgård.

The political phrasemonger, Stensgård, could not become a living personality unless he were given some traits from the politicians whom Ibsen had seen personally at close range, and for this purpose the author could hardly escape taking his models from among contemporary liberal leaders. It lay in the circumstances of the time that the liberals were the only ones who had anything demagogic about them, the conservatives did not at all court the people, they held their own by their grip on the

pletely estranged from Bjornson, that he even harbored unkind thoughts about him. In January, 1869, we see from a letter that he would have no connection with the periodical *Tor Ide og Virkelighed* (*Tor Thought and Reality*) to which he had three months earlier taken a friendly attitude, since in the mean time he had seen that Bjornson was to be one of the editors. "I cannot," he wrote, "bring myself to work together with men about whom I have the supposition, built on experience, that they will, on the first occasion which presents itself, employ their respective newspapers and pens against me." And in July, 1869, he wrote about Bjornson: "For him, of course, there exist but two kinds of people: those whom he can use to his own profit, and those who may be troublesome to him." Immediately after, while he was in Stockholm, and in the company of Jakob Lökke, he was, in his own opinion, given "full certainty" of the "dishonorable hypocrisy" which Bjornson had used against him.

What specific things lie back of all this, I have not found any information about. If I should venture a guess, it would be that some one of Ibsen's "Hollander" friends had written to him telling something or other that Bjornson was supposed to have said or done. Certain it is, at least, that suspicion and ill feeling had prevailed against old friendship. And Ibsen felt no pang of conscience in borrowing special traits from Bjornson for his political phrasemonger.

It might be amusing enough, but still it had a slightly disagreeable flavor that he let Stensgård repeat the remark which in the "Hollander" group was attributed to Bjornson: "Have you ever been equal to recognizing me?" The satire had a more gen-

eral application in the fact that Stensgård, like Björnson, always included God in everything. This was not a thing that Björnson was alone about, but there was perhaps no one who misused it so naively as he. In his first draft Ibsen had given his play a still stronger color of this mixture of the religious and the worldly than it had in the final form. He had even given it the title *The League of Youth or The Lord and Co*. And he had let Stensgård close his Seventeenth of May speech in the first act with the words "It is for us to decide if we will govern our little world. Hurrah for the Lord and Company." Afterwards, when the League of Youth had been organized, Doctor Fieldbo greeted Stensgård with the words "Well, well, here we have Our Lord, junior." All of this coarse parody Ibsen deleted, and the play thereby retained less of a sting against Björnson than it had at first. Yet no one could mistake the fact that Björnson was the father of the whole mode of speech in Stensgård.

Thus the comedy was finished, full of living touches from the contemporary struggle, sated with election cries and vigorous phrases which came perceptibly close to the politics of the day, and were sometimes cut directly out of the very latest argument in the Storting or in the newspapers. There was something of Aristophanes in the high handed way in which Ibsen made the most of people and incidents. At the same time, he himself was of the opinion that he had everything transfused into a higher "symbolic" truth which should retain its vitality in the future. Therefore he considered the drama "peaceable," and therefore he wrote time and again to his publisher that it was as suitable for Denmark and Sweden as for Norway, in deed he wrote that "I doubt whether anyone shall find therein

a single one of such markedly Norwegian expressions as are unsuitable to the Copenhagen stage "

Yet he had no protest to make against the fact that when the play was presented at the Royal Theater in Copenhagen, in 1870, Vilhelm Wiehe used—as the newspapers put it—"the Norwegian accent" in playing Stensgård (the same thing, by the way, was done by the actor who played Bastian Monsen) Ibsen himself saw the presentation in the fall, and at that time he thanked Wiehe for the "masterly performance" "Every thing was excellent," he wrote, "and I know of no point, which I should wish to be different. You have caught my meaning even to the innermost sense, and you present your conception with ingenious fidelity." Quite certainly he would not have been displeased, either, if he could have heard that Johannes Poulsen played Stensgård wholly in Norwegian at the same theater in 1923. He would only have found it unnecessary.

Politicians of the Stensgård type can undoubtedly be met with in other parts of the world, yet it is true that Stensgård is Norwegian, just as surely as Taitatin de Tarascon is of Southern France. The thing that makes *The League of Youth* a drama of general significance is exactly the fact that all the persons in it have been given so strong and independent a life that they stand entirely on their own feet. Ibsen had never before written a play with such a group of freely living persons: old Lunde strid, Chamberlain Bratsberg, Daniel Heire, Monsen, Bastian, Madam Rundholmen—we feel as if we know them all personally, but first and last Lawyer Stensgård, the oratorical hero who intoxicates himself and others with his words, but who himself never takes them seriously. Ibsen has exposed him to

the depths of his soul; only toward the end has he given the coarse selfishness too much the upper hand, so that the comedy slips over into farce

The interest of the day fastened itself chiefly upon that which struck most directly into contemporary affairs, and the play was received as though it were a partisan pamphlet Bjornson called it an "assassination in the sacrificial grove of poetry," and many years later he explained what he meant "It was that *The League of Youth* sought to make of our young party for liberty a flock of ambitious speculators, whose love of country could be borne away with then phraseology, and especially that prominent men were first made recognizable and were then invested with false hearts and blackguardly characters, and pasted with spurious labels "

When the play was presented for the first time at the Christiania Theater, October 18, 1869, a few students, liberals, and language enthusiasts hissed, and thereby the signal to fight had been given It looked like a witticism that the theater, between the first and second presentations, played Bjornson's *Between the Battles* For the next evening, October 20, when *The League of Youth* was presented for the benefit of the author, there was a great disturbance of hissing in the theater, and the third time, October 22, there was out-and-out fighting between those who hissed and those who cheered *Morgenbladet* delighted in reporting that "the Stensgård family" had been out to demonstrate The author rejoiced, too "I was prepared for the opposition, and it would have been a disappointment to me if it had failed to appear " Far away, in another part of the world,

he received news of the hissing at home, and it kept alive in him
the memory of the state of war in which he lived

*The poisonous sting
Brought mem'ries unwelcome—
My star I'm thanking—
My home's still the old home*

INTEGRATION AND SQUARING OF ACCOUNTS

THE *League of Youth* was printed in the spring of 1869, but was not published until the fall. In the meantime it was sent to all the leading theaters in Scandinavia, the Christiania Theater, the Royal Theater in Copenhagen, and the Dramatic Theater in Stockholm. Everywhere it was accepted for presentation and played soon afterwards. It was the first time that the Royal Theater in Copenhagen accepted a play by Ibsen, and it was the first time that he himself applied to the Dramatic Theater in Stockholm, where his friend Professor Lorentz Dietrichson made the arrangements for him.

To Ibsen it was a new experience to have time thus to arrange for the success of his play, and deliberately to prepare for its triumph. Moreover, it was new to him that the doors opened so readily at his knock. There is an altogether new tone in a letter written from Dresden in the spring of 1869: "I am living a pleasant and care-free life."

Financially, he was beginning to get a firm foothold. He made up his accounts with his publisher every New Year, like any other business man, he would soon be able to put money in the bank, he could enjoy a pleasant bit of excitement by taking a chance at the lottery, and he could permit himself luxuries of various sorts—could live elegantly, could send his wife and child

Lie

Op til!

O, jeg vedt at det ligst da ned,
 Gjennem fjord Klatterne Skyer ned, -
 Hvor det blomstrende Strømmel
 Klæber jeg saa gerne,
 Du er Sang i Lu og Lygt,
 Du er grønne Lændel,
 Der i Natfesterne Bragt
 Er det født at blomstret

Der er Alting Skyer og regn
 Som et Barn dommes mundel, -
 Der jeg tænker mangt et højt
 Til min Gode Gudsmandel
 Der er Træk for hver en Staal,
 Længsel for hver en Hænder
 Aftensvender mundel og Jval
 Digger dem i Himmelen

The First Page of Ibsen's Versified Letter of Proposal to
 Rikke Holst Written in 1853 Original in the University
 Library Oslo

on pleasure trips, and could himself move about more freely according to mood and inclination. His own well being was reflected in the letter he sent to Dietrichson in the spring of 1869, asking his friend to write a short biography of him, suitable for a German periodical. "No sad tale of a poet in distress will do any longer. Write rather that the Government and Storthing have granted me a stipend, that I am traveling, residing *in dem grossen Vaterlande*, etc."

Dietrichson tells that when he received this letter he did not recognize the hand, and was quite surprised to see from whom it came. Ibsen had acquired a new handwriting. It was no longer the easy, flowing penmanship of earlier days, but a firm and

Sei stets beglückt Du schöne
Gegend! Auf Wiedersehen, Ihr
lieben lieben Menschen!

Gossensass am Tage meiner
Abreise, 3 Oktober 1882

Henrik Ibsen

A Greeting to Gossensass. Written by Ibsen in the Guest Book
of Hotel Gröbner in 1882

strong hand, with letters somewhat back-slanting, a hand that gave evidence of will, that did not let itself go, that indited its words firmly and deliberately.

Three weeks later his picture followed, equally new and unrecognizable. He had shaved so that only his side whiskers re-

mained, and, instead of the old full beard, one saw a pair of tightly drawn lips over a chin that was equally firm and strong. It was no longer the familiar, somewhat negligent figure. He had acquired style. And so had his clothes, he now wore an elegant velvet jacket bordered with silk. Nothing remained of the Bohemian of earlier days, a fine gentleman of means had taken his place.

He himself came to Stockholm about a month later. It had first been his intention to move to Oslo when winter was over, but, being anxious to delay his going home, he hit upon the idea of lingering in Stockholm for a while. As soon as he had finished *The League of Youth*, so that he was ready to make the final copy, he sent an application to the Norwegian Government for money to spend a year in Sweden in the study of art, literature, and other cultural matters, and on July 3, 1869, he received 300 specie dollars for this purpose. Less than three weeks later he was in Stockholm.

The first of his activities there was his participation in the Scandinavian orthographical meeting which was held during the last week in July. This was a gathering of delegates from the Scandinavian university towns for the purpose of discussing common rules of orthography for the Danish, Dano-Norwegian and Swedish languages. Ibsen was included in the delegation from Norway, to which belonged, among others, Headmaster Jacob Løkke. He approved of the plan, especially now since he had himself become a Scandinavian author, and was glad to have a hand in eliminating unnecessary differences in the spelling of the three languages.

The meeting accomplished not a little in cutting away various

dead frills of language, its proposals being perhaps in this respect most effective in Norway Ibsen had already earlier adopted many changes in his own style of writing, and the orthographical meeting proposed further changes of the same kind, as well as various substitutions which should bring the literary languages closer together Ibsen gladly endorsed all such changes, indeed, he even gave up the Norwegian double consonants which he had used more and more freely during the last years The Scandinavian idea was stronger in him than the national—witness that three years earlier he had striven to eliminate ultra Norwegian words from *Love's Comedy*, and that he had been on his guard against everything ultra Norwegian in *The League of Youth* In his work for common rules of spelling there was a wish to win and secure for himself a place in all the Scandinavian countries

Ibsen remained faithful to the rules formulated at the meeting in Stockholm, and was in fact almost the only one in Norway and Denmark to adopt and hold fast to this Scandinavian orthography Intended as a means of union, it came to be almost personally Ibsenesque But it bears witness, all the same, of his being Scandinavian in temper

His old bitterness against the Swedes had now entirely vanished Meeting Carl Snoilsky in Stockholm, he could say that he now judged otherwise of the Manderström politics in the Danish question than he had done at the time they opposed each other in Rome Unfortunately Snoilsky had to admit that he too had changed sides, so that they were still disagreed But their friendship was not disturbed thereby Ibsen looked with friendly eyes upon Sweden and all things Swedish, he found

no hindrance here to his Scandinavianism. As it turned out, he did not remain for a whole year in Stockholm, as he had originally intended to do. The plan must have been given up quite soon, for he sent his wife and son into the country in Germany for the summer. He wanted to settle permanently in Dresden. The stay in Stockholm, therefore, lasted only ten weeks.

But it was a glorious time for him. After having been there for two months, he wrote to Hegel: "My visit here has been, and still is, a continual round of festivity, from all sides I meet a courtesy and a good will which cannot be described." Lorenz Dietrichson in *Ny Illustrerad Tidning* called him "one of the greatest skilds of our times" and he was introduced into all the best circles in the Swedish capital—among artists and literary people, bourgeoisie and nobility, and at the King's court.

It was the first time that the fashionable world thus opened its doors to Ibsen, and he was quite childishly pleased and grateful. He who at one time had been so low in the social scale felt it as a restitution that the upper class now received and honored him. Animated and amiable, he moved about in general society and among groups of companions, taking everyone by storm. Through all his life he had longed for everything that was fair and fine, and it was balm to his soul to be permitted to partake of it.

The same thing happened the next year, 1870, when he was in Copenhagen for two summer months. Here, too, he was admitted to the most distinguished circles in the city, was welcomed at Iru Heiberg's and in all the other best houses.

Through all this there appeared in him much of a small

bourgeois snobbery He considered it a great honor when King Carl XV summoned him on the day before he was to leave Stockholm and made him a Knight of the Order of Wasa Before he left Copenhagen, he asked one of his friends there to help him secure an appointment to the Order of Danebrog He joked a little about his own "pretty pride," but he meant it seriously, he attached importance to the matter, and thought that such an honor would be "a great support" to his reputation in Norway When he did become a Knight of Danebrog in January, 1871, after *The Pretenders* had been played at the Royal Theater, there was no end to his thanks for the honor "I shall never be sufficiently grateful to the men who have brought this about, now my countrymen will find my collection of poems twice as good as they otherwise would!"

At the same time he was busy with an attempt to secure a Turkish order which had been promised to him when he was in Egypt "This honor," he wrote, and he underlined the words, "would be in the highest degree flattering to me, and would also be of the highest value to my literary position in Norway" It took some time before the order was granted Not before May, 1871, did he receive a diploma and star as Commander of the Order of Medjidie, but then he was again heartily glad It irritated him that so long a time passed before he was granted any Norwegian decoration, it seemed to him an unjust "slight," and he collected other honors as a "reparation" He decked himself out with insignias when he went to a café, and he had his picture taken with a whole string of decorations, he felt that in this way

he was elevated into the most highly respectable class of the upper bourgeoisie

It is well worth noting how, in his concern about securing honors, he constantly had in mind the effect on the Norwegians, it was always the Norwegians he wished to win—and to conquer. Here, too, it was Norway that lived in him, a fact which proves that it was not sheer snobbery when he set his heart on honors. They were a sort of weapon to him, and could even serve as a defense of his spiritual freedom. With a decoration on his breast he entered the citizenry, he became as one of the others. With much greater freedom, therefore, he could in his books raise opposition to this society, since personally he was not free. Thus even a Turkish order was useful to him.

While he was in Stockholm in 1869 it was arranged that he should be one of the Norwegian delegates to the celebration at the Suez Canal. King Carl himself helped to bring this about. Ibsen sailed by steamboat from Marseilles early in October, took part in a long journey up the Nile to the First Cataract, was in the first fleet that sailed through the great new canal in the middle of November, had his homeward route by way of Paris where he had opportunity to see many of the city's art treasures, and returned at last to Dresden in the middle of December.

"The stay in Egypt," he wrote a year later, "has been the most interesting and instructive period in my life." The journey thither was actually a step in the inner process of integration and adjustment in which he was at this time engaged. After the completion of *The League of Youth* there followed one or two years in which he could not make himself take up any extensive

writing The work which lay within him straining for expression was the great drama about Emperor Julian But this required a thoroughgoing adjustment of all the deepest problems of life, and many things drove him at this time to look both inward at himself and far out into the world

The thing which had forced itself on his attention in Egypt was the picture of a dead culture, a mighty past buried in sand, leaving nothing behind but white bones and deserted scenes of conflagration He was tormented by the question of how every thing could have been so completely destroyed that there remained not the slightest trace of it in present day life His answer was given a year later in the "Balloon Letter" that he sent home to one of the Swedish ladies whose guest he had been in Stockholm He thought he had discovered that the old Egyptian culture had in reality never been alive, had never known a war time of hot internal struggle. And

*Where no spirit is indwelling,
Where no pulse within the form
Shows that hatred, song, or gladness
Beat in hearts alive and warm,
There all glory but the sadness
Of decay and death is knelling*

We see in his letters from this period that his thoughts revolve about the same question and the same demand The personal unfolding of life was the thing of moment to him every man should be himself freely and strongly This he wrote to Laura Peterson, the young woman who had been bold enough to write a sort of continuation of *Brand* "The main thing is to remain sincere and true in relation to one's self It is not a matter

of willing this or that, but of willing what one absolutely must do because of being one's self, and because one cannot do otherwise. Everything else leads only to falsehood."

After his return from Egypt, he accomplished nothing during the spring beyond going through *The Pretenders* to make it conform to the new spelling rules which he now began to use, and to clear away certain small flaws that Georg Brandes had pointed out in his treatise. Later in the summer, in July, the war broke out between Germany and France, and he fled to Denmark. In September, however, he returned to Dresden.

"In these disturbed times," he complained, "I cannot concentrate my thoughts on anything of great depth." His mood flitted about amongst various plans, at one time he even decided to write an opera on a theme from the Saga of Sigurd the Crusader—by a strange coincidence at exactly the same time that Bjornson decided upon the same theme. But nothing came of Ibsen's plan. "This damned war has a disturbing effect on me," he complained anew. The affairs of the world occupied all his thoughts.

He seemed to see about him a struggle between opposing life principles, and he began to be apprehensive lest present day culture should share the fate of the Egyptian civilization. He felt as much besieged in Dresden as the Frenchmen actually were in Paris, his thoughts could escape only by balloon. Little Sigurd was beaten every day in school because he would not take sides with Germany, his schoolmates tried to pound him into submission. And Ibsen saw with terror how Prussian mass-control and "State machinery" were transforming men into mere numbers and bringing the world under its tyranny. He heard

"echoed sounds" of the same coarse way of thinking in his home land as well, there too the "plebs" were seeking control, and he himself stood "on the ruins of a broken dream"

But he raised a revolt against the suppression of intellect, he would not give up the hope that man should prevail over the masses, spirit over machinery For

Defeat lies in the victory

The Prussian's sword his lash will be

The thing which was to determine the victory was whether or not deeds could become poems, whether the struggle of the day could be transformed into art and thus become a lasting vital power in the people He believed in this because he believed in himself

For beauty our own times are yearning,

But 'tis not known to Bismarck's learning

It seemed to him impossible that Bismarck and Moltke could give impetus to song and intellectual progress, and therefore they were condemned

It was the same thought which he had recently expressed in the poem he wrote to King Carl, "Without a Name"

More is the dream that ne'er in waking

Loved, than life itself, my Lord

It is like the poem breaking

'Gainst my soul's locked prison, shaking

Lion-wild its bars, and making

Pleas for my creative word

The same thought filled also the "Rhymed Letter to Fru Heiberg," which he wrote in the spring of 1871, praising the memory of the beauty she had created by her art on the stage

It had lived before his inner vision for almost twenty years, and now, "at a time that has little of beauty" he found comfort in the memory. It was an art which would continue to live, which would give Denmark itself a richer life through the ages, for the very reason that it was not "a work of stones and beams," but a child.

Of the spirit,

Of emotion—

Personality and dream

It was in the midst of such thoughts that he undertook a discussion of his own life work. In October, 1870, he sent the Danish critic, Peter Hansen, an analysis of all his authorship from this very point of view. He did not recognize anything except that which was rooted in what he himself had lived through, and it was this personal element that he wished to seek out. In December, 1870, he began going through all his poems of twenty years with the purpose of making a selection for a volume.

At various times earlier he had thought of publishing a volume of his poems, but nothing had ever come of it. He had always discarded too many. Now Jakob Lokke had reminded him of the plan when they met in Stockholm, and when his publisher also brought the same proposal a little later, he took up the matter. It suited him well just at this time to be busied with such work. Almost a year passed before he succeeded in getting all the manuscripts from home. But during the first months of 1871 he worked at nothing else.

"It has been a deuced piece of work," he wrote while in the midst of his task, "to have to go through all the numerous viewpoints which I have long since left behind." Nor did he acknowl-

edge now so much as a third of his old poems, and of those which he found worthy of reprinting he permitted only a small number to remain unrevised, many of them he rewrote completely. But then he was able to say of what he included that "it all belongs, after all, to the history of my development."

The growth and change in his own soul can perhaps most clearly be measured in that poem which he placed first in his collection and which he made an expression of his program, the poem which he now called "Musicians." He cut it out of a long national romantic work written in 1851, and even the single poem which he retained from the collection he condensed from nine to only four stanzas, for he had now become a master in the art of packing every word with thoughts and images. Still more important was the change in thought content. The national romantic subject, the Sprite in the waterfall, became now a mere poetic symbol, and everything centered in the spiritual suffering which had made him a poet.

*The shudder and song of the torrent
Have made my soul their own*

Something of the same change of tone appeared in the poem, "Building Plans." When he wrote it in the fifties, the poet's dream had to be content with a small wing of his castle, while the love dream occupied the whole house. Now the castle was too small for the poet's dream, and the love dream had fled altogether.

It was both his misfortune and his fortune that he was a poet and nothing else. He was living the same life which he described ironically in the poem, "The Petrel!"

*Something 'twixt flying and swimming it is,
A dream between heaven and hell's abyss*

*Too light for the waves, too heavy for air—
Ah! bird and bard,—our trouble is here!*

His whole outlook on life was colored by the fact that he was an artist. He measured his life experiences by the standard of his poetic ideal. In *Love's Comedy* he had flung out the word "lies" against contemporary mores, and he had declared judgment upon the whole western society in his poem "The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln." He had set the demands of his ideals up before every day persons in all his recent controversial dreams. Now, in the winter of 1870-71, he was drawn into an ardent correspondence with Georg Brandes about life and ideals, remaining still a revolutionary in his idealism.

He was a trifle afraid of contending with a man so trained in philosophy as Brandes, and the first time he set out to give a real exposition of his view of life, February 17, 1871, he even made a rough draft for his letter. It became evident that emotions rather than stern thought held control of his opinions. All attempts at tinkering with small political reforms merely roused his ire. He placed all emphasis on the intellectual freedom of the individual man. What Goethe had proclaimed sank deeply into his spirit.

*Nur der erwirbt sich Freiheit wie das Leben,
der täglich sie erobern muss*

Without knowing it, Ibsen repeated the words that both Voltaire and later Karl Marx had used about the difference be-

tween special "freedoms" and the true "freedom," but, as he used the phrase, he would reject all "freedoms," all efforts to secure rights for the citizen within the State. And he cried "The State is the curse of the individual—the State must be done away with! In that revolution I shall take part. Undermine the idea of the State, set up voluntary choice and spiritual kinship as the only determining factors for union—that is the beginning of a freedom that is worth something. Yes, my dear friend, it is imperative not to let one's self be frightened by its venerable vested rights. The State has its root in time, it will culminate in time. Greater things than this will fall, all religion will fall. Neither moral principles nor artistic forms have any eternity ahead of them. How much are we at bottom obliged to hold fast to? Who can guarantee that two and two are not five on Jupiter?"

He had wrestled with the same thoughts at the time he wrote *Brand*, and even at that time he had used, in speaking about religion, the threatening words "Each thing created finds its *finis*." Now his revolutionary ideas seemed even more consistently carried out.

It strikes one as strange, therefore, to read in letters of the same period hard words about the French as "a revolutionary nation without restraint and without discipline." He wrote about the actors at the Christiania Theater that it was necessary to "bridle their rebellious tendencies." "*Vae victis!*" he wrote, "was the motto of ancient times, and should be the motto today also." He wrote about the danger of the "inner disintegration" toward which the Norwegian people were led by Sverdrup and Jaabæk, and he took sides with the conservative government. "I support it with my pen and all my strength." He criticized it

only because it was not severe enough "People who permit Jaabæk and Bjornson to go about free, qualify themselves for being put in the hole" He mourned on the day that Rome was taken from the Pope and put under the new free Italy Rome had been "the only sanctuary in Europe, the only spot which enjoyed true liberty—freedom from the political tyranny of freedom"

In such words and thoughts we meet a respect for the State, a demand for a strong political power, which cannot be easily reconciled with the hatred against the State that he otherwise proclaimed It would not be advisable to try to form into a political system all the paradoxes which he thus flung about him, for it was no system There existed in Ibsen all the time exactly the same contradictions which had struck the people of Stockholm with such surprise at the time he came there They had expected that the man who had written *Brand* should look like a stern ascetic, at enmity with the world, and when instead they met this fine, pleasant gentleman, they could not help wondering In his life Ibsen was the most respectable man one could imagine, he was actually conservative The revolution was within him

When the young Swedish Gambetta, Adolf Hedén, attacked Ibsen for his conservatism, he answered

No still in my lifelong creed I live

Your changing paroxysms is a futile plan,

Make a sweep of the chessboard, and I'm your man

Dreaming of a new deluge that would descend upon society, he would not let any Noah escape

With pleasure I will torpedo the Ark

This was not politics, and indeed politics was just what he wanted to avoid. He rejoiced in the thought of a new era, born of spiritual enfranchisement. "The old illusory [that is dream-bound] France has been broken in pieces, when the new practical Prussia is also broken, we are with a single bound in the midst of the coming era. Hey, how ideas then will tumble about us! And it is indeed time that they should— Ideas need a new content and a new interpretation. Liberty, equality, and brotherhood are no longer the same as they were in the days of the late lamented guillotine. This is what the politicians will not understand, and therefore I hate them. Those people want only special revolutions, outward revolutions, political readjustments, etc. But all this is inconsequential. The thing that counts is the revolution of the human spirit."

His thought was revolutionary. He bowed before the powers—and he touched a mine under them. It was the conflict and the drama of his temperament that he hated what he upheld. He stood with his feet firmly planted in life, but his ideals, his dreams, reached far beyond life. Thereby arose a persistent contradiction within him. He became the great question mark in contemporary life, an explosive power in the intellectual world. But he became this because he was a poet—a dreamer and a seer.

Chapter Six

THE THIRD EMPIRE

IBSEN was in constant debate with himself. His thought could never rest. But he sought always to find the balance between the contradictory elements in his personality, and liked, therefore, to enter into arguments with friends and acquaintances, or even with strangers. He enjoyed discussion of all the most vital problems on earth. There was in him a fire which would not let him have peace, and he in turn would not let the world have peace, either.

When he moved to Germany in 1868, he came upon a time full of heated controversy about different views of life, and he was soon drawn into it. His intellectual boundaries seemed to be extended. Formerly he had been confined almost wholly to contact with Norwegians and other Scandinavians, now the whole world opened to his thought. Life in Germany in the year of the war and in the period of reconstruction which followed "held for me," he wrote twenty years later, "in many respects a transforming power." It seemed to himself that it was German intellectual life which gave him new visions, but in reality it was not anything purely German, not the national German spirit, that attracted him. It was something universal, the free study of life on a general human basis, that kindled the fire in him.

The sixties were a period of mighty intellectual conflicts in all the great European countries. Norway was not wholly in

the movement at first True, there was a small and select group which welcomed the new ideas and discussed them with fervor, especially that group which gathered about Vinje and Sars But the ideas were still but little known to the general public, it was chiefly national matters and minor questions of religious criticism that were subjects for open discussion Many things that raised a tumult in Europe seemed to pass lightly over Norway

In Denmark Georg Brandes opened the battle He led intellectual currents from Europe into the country, first by his treatise on Taine in 1870, then still more strongly with his lectures called *Main Currents* at the end of 1871 His work agitated Ibsen When in the spring of 1872 he had read the first volume of *Main Currents*, he could not think about anything else, night or day "It is," he wrote, "one of those books which open a great chasm between yesterday and today" He saw before him a "war to the knife between two epochs" The war was already in full progress in Europe

While Hegel's philosophy was still the leading one in Norway, there was general revolt against him in Germany, beginning as early as in the fifties Now at last Schopenhauer prevailed with his doctrine of the blind will in human destiny, and the new natural science gave birth to a philosophy of materialism which spread deeply and widely Büchner's work, *Kraft und Stoff*, came out in one edition after the other, Haeckel and Carl Vogt launched more and more violent attacks upon the old dogmas about the world of ideas, and Marx made materialism the foundation for the entire workmen's movement It seemed as if all established belief would give way Lotze, to be sure, built up a new idealistic philosophy, but he, too, had

to build on a new basis when he wished to reach the soul in the human being, and with his "psychophysics" Fechner began to lead all psychical research into new channels, making it a natural science.

It may be doubtful how much Ibsen read of all this. Brandes wrote and reprimanded him for not having "mastered the modern achievements of science," but he defended himself by saying that "what we laymen do not learn as science, I believe that we get in a certain degree as premonition or instinct." Again he was assisted by his remarkable power of sensing and partaking in the struggle about him. And if he had not noticed any of the other writings, it was certainly impossible for him to remain outside, when Eduard von Hartmann in 1869 sent out his *Philosophie des Unbewussten* which tried to connect the pessimism of Schopenhauer with the evolution theory of natural science, the idea of the blind will with the belief in a true continuity in life. It was a work which started a tremendous discussion, which was printed in many editions, and which called out new writings in vast numbers. All the fundamental problems of existence were brought out for general discussion.

Hegel had thought that he succeeded in harmonizing philosophy and Christianity. Now the harmony was suddenly broken, and the danger seemed greatest on the side of Christianity. The conflict about it raged in all lands. English natural science turned it back on Christianity, and Huxley proclaimed agnosticism. In France and Germany historical criticism—Renan and Strauss—undermined belief in the Biblical writings. Everything seemed to combine to overthrow the religion which for one and a half thousand years had prevailed in Europe. How was it possible

that Ibsen, the author of *Brand*, should fail to be deeply stirred by all this strife? It was like a conflict taken out of his own soul

The conflict naturally associated itself with an idea on which he had labored for many years—that of a drama about the Roman Emperor Julian, who had turned against Christianity and had wished to raise up again the old paganism in a new form, and whom therefore Christian history had given the name “the Apostate” It was the first dramatic plot that had taken root in Ibsen after he had come to Rome During his first summer in Genzano (1864) it had first occurred to him Lorentz Dietrichson had happened to read to him about Julian, from the old history of emperors by Ammianus Marcellinus, who had himself accompanied Julian on his last campaign in 363, and Ibsen was so moved by the subject that it began to take form in his mind as a drama

We have no information about what it was in Julian that instantly held him with such power I have at one time ventured the guess that it was the rebellious Julian who at that time most strongly aroused his curiosity He had just then written about the rebel, Carl Skule, and he was working in his thoughts on a drama about another rebel, Magnus Heineson He felt a kinship with rebels, especially with those who suffered defeat Some have thought that the tragic circumstance which aroused his dramatic interest was the fact that Julian in his revolt came to strengthen and promote that which he hated But when we remember what was the spiritual crisis in which Ibsen found himself at just this time—the crisis which at the very first fostered *Brand* in him—then I think we shall acknowledge that it was something greater and deeper that at-

tracted him to Julian. A question, a torturing, almost hopeless question, haunted his mind in those days. Where shall I find again a faith and hope on which I may live my life? Then he met the same spiritual struggle in this emperor who had been a Christian, but who had lost his faith and afterwards sought the satisfaction of his religious longing in pagan philosophic mysticism. It was his own question seen in its broad historic setting. Precisely therefore, the drama developed for him into a struggle between the deepest powers of the soul and of life. If anything was world history, certainly this was—and a world history which constantly repeated itself.

He felt himself raised to a new world of thought by this subject, he felt his powers rise within him, and he was wildly elated. He worked on the drama through the winter of 1864-65, thinking that he would have it finished by summer. He was not, generally, willing to let the public know what he had in hand, but of Julian people were told long in advance. *Illustreret Nyhetsblad* announced for him in the fall of 1864. "Besides studying the history and art of the great city, he works intermittently on a tragedy, *Julianus Apostata*, and on a long poem." And a Christian correspondent to *Drammens Blad* announced in June, 1865, that now one might "quite soon expect from him a larger dramatic work, *Julianus Apostata*."

It did not go so fast as that. He made many preparations. First of all, of course, he read Ammian, using a German school translation which had been published in 1853. Then he borrowed books in the German library at Kapitol, especially works on Church history dealing with Julian, for instance one by August Nander (1812) and one by J. E. Auer (1855). He also con-

sulted sources. He was hardly able to read Greek, a subject in which he had failed in his matriculation examination, but he could manage Latin, and he worked his way through various writings from the period with which he had to become familiar.¹ From all these sources he made extracts, but perhaps he did not actually write a single word of the drama itself. First *Brand* intervened and occupied the whole summer and fall of 1865. Afterwards followed a period in which he could not properly concentrate his energies on anything.

In April, 1866, he learned that Carsten Hauch had published a long tragedy about *Julian the Apostate*. But it made no difference to him, he only determined that he would not read the tragedy, so that it should not confuse his ideas. He might well have read it, for that matter, Hauch's play was a weak production of his old age, it did not penetrate into any inner struggle in Julian, but attempted merely to preach religious tolerance. It is more probable that an early work by Hauch, the drama about Emperor Tiberius (1828), was of some help to Ibsen, both in showing why paganism had to fall and in portraying dissimulating gestures in the regent. Still more stimulating to his thought, perhaps, was the dramatic poem *Kalanus* by T. Paludan Müller. It was published (1854) together with the dramatic poem *Ahasverus* which had quite certainly left traces in *Brand*, and it, too, depicted a struggle between two religions, a worldly and a heavenly one, more, it is true, by means of dialogue and discussion than by dramatic suspense, but still with passages, some of

¹ For instance, a speech of appreciation to Julian in 362 A. D. by the Senator Namertinus. Cf. E. Strömberg *Studia in panegyricos veteres Latinos* Uppsala, 1902 pp. 63-66 where we find among other things evidence of Ibsen's curious mistake of taking Lucius Brutus to be two persons.

considerable length and others shorter, which might excite the creative powers in Ibsen

Yet he was not able to get a proper grasp on the drama of Julian. He thought he learned much from certain articles about Julian which the Danish Church historian, A. Listov, wrote for *Landslandet* in May, 1866, and during the following summer, while he lived at Frascati, it seemed as if the whole history of the world were spread out before him on the Roman plain. But still he was unable to "stride the beast." Soon afterwards *Peer Gynt* filled his mind. After it was finished, he went back to Julian. During the first months of 1868 he studied and laid plans. But it seemed that the subject was still too stupendous for him, he could not give form to it.

Once in the winter of 1864-65 he abruptly asked Loientz Dietrichson "Why may one not write a drama in ten acts? I cannot possibly find room in five." And now in 1868 he put the question with equal abruptness to Vilhelm Bergsøe "Why may one not write a tragedy in nine acts?" Bergsøe only laughed and answered "Why not in nineteen?" Ibsen turned on him with his sharp eyes, and said "No fooling! I will write it in nine acts." Bergsøe then remarked that it would be impossible to play a tragedy of that length. "But," he said, "you can of course divide it." "Yes—I can divide it," said Ibsen, and thereupon he was silent.

The truth was undoubtedly that he still lacked spiritual content with which to fill his drama, it was not complete in his own mind. And for the third time it had to give way to another work, this time to *The League of Youth*. But it was only hidden—not forgotten. He was an economist, here as elsewhere, and he did

not readily lay aside for all time the ideas he had once found Magnus Heineson is practically the only example of such discarding of subject matter, and in this case it is remarkable that he could even consider such a national historic drama after the crisis of 1864. The subject of Julian must have gained a greater and greater significance for him, the more deeply he became interested in the great problems of life.

Along in the spring of 1869 he determined to set to work again upon Julian. "I feel," he wrote, "that it has now attained sufficient clearness." But still many things intervened—the journey to Stockholm, the journey to Egypt, the revision of *The Pretenders*, and then the Franco-Prussian war. One thing and another drove him into a broad readjustment of life, and thereby he penetrated more and more deeply into the thoughts which were to force their way to the surface in the new work. After June, 1869, I have not seen Julian mentioned in any letter from Ibsen for a full year and a half. But on December 20, 1870, he wrote to Georg Brandes: "One morning some time ago my new work became clearly and strikingly apparent to me." He threw himself into his subject in exultation. Earlier he had thought of dividing it into two volumes, making a double drama of it. Now it grew so that it became three dramas, and in a month he already had the first ready and had progressed some distance into the second. Then he promised his publisher that he would have the whole work ready, "when I reckon ample time," for printing in June, 1871.

Instead of fulfilling his promise, he laid the drama away again. In the spring of 1871 his head and hands were fully occupied with his collection of poems. That, too, belonged to the

review of his life When it was out of the way, he was at last ready to write Julian In July, 1871, he began writing in earnest, and during this summer he gave himself no respite In fact he now worked continuously on the new drama up to the spring of 1873 He made a short summer visit to Bohemia and Austria in 1872, and settled for five or six weeks in Berchtesgaden in Bavaria, with which he was familiar since 1868 But here, too, he worked and wrote "The monster Julian" would not loosen its hold on him, it seemed as if it would demand his heart's blood

None of his other works, either before or after, had such a labored and slow birth as this For nine years it lived and grew in his thoughts Time and again it was shoved aside, but always it forced its way to the fore again It was a matter of vital importance for him to get it written In a way he wanted to give all of himself to it, and therefore he said, both before and after, and insisted all through his life, that this was his chief work

Year after year he struggled with the great questions with which all of life, for the individual and for society, are bound up When he wrote *Brand*, the worst of all the visions into the future which he let Brand see in the moment of his destruction, was that his people were too petty, too weak, to take part in the struggle for the salvation of the world when it was an issue between faith and doubt

*We are weak, may fairly plead
From a giants' war exemption*

But he could not remain standing indifferently outside For the faith which had broken down in him in 1864, and which experience afterwards had more and more torn out of him, he

must find a new basis, if life was to hold any meaning for him. When he took an historic struggle as the subject for his drama, it was only because he found in it exactly those opposing forces which contended within himself.

One time, while he was preparing to write the drama about Julian, probably in the spring of 1871, he had an impulse to write a special prologue, somewhat similar to the prologue in heaven to Goethe's *Faust*. Ibsen intended that it should take place on "the rampart of the vast abyss," over the yawning chasm which according to the gospel was established between the rich man and Lazarus. There was light on the one side and darkness on the other, and there among the spirits was waged the battle about souls. There stood Julian, there the whole drama would in reality take place—and there stood Ibsen himself. With full justice he could point out, time and again, that what he let Julian struggle through, he had himself lived through in the spirit. In this book, too, there was "much of self-dissection."

He had been compelled to discard so many of his ideals, that he had come to the conclusion that "the entire race is on the wrong track." It was impossible to continue "this search for unattainable ideals." It was a matter of finding one's way from romantic dream to honest recognition of truth, and for this reason all the new philosophic discussion must necessarily take hold on him. It was its purpose to substitute reality for ideas and to find the harmony between desire, ability, and will in man.

No other question had lived so personally in Ibsen as this, and never had it been so insistent in him as it was in these last years. What he cared for in philosophy was everything that had a bearing on the ethical, that established laws for life work and

held a man to an account of himself In this account the will was of first importance, was what made man a man It was the axis about which the problem revolved in both *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, and now he wanted to search it to the very bottom It was in this search that Julian was to help him

He took the young prince in the midst of struggle, when he was in distress and doubt, when he felt that he was deserted by God, and was conscious of the growth of evil within him He lived in a double terror, he was afraid of the Emperor, and he was afraid of Christ Both would shut him off from life, would suppress the thirst for life within him Yet it was for life that he longed, he wanted to go out and fight for himself, and find a truth which should unite doctrine and the demands of life In the emperor's palace and elsewhere about him he saw an abominable contrast between faith and action, and when he turned away from the Christians to the pagan philosopher Libanios, he met the same contrast There was within him a cry for a new revelation

The same cry had resounded within Ibsen, too He led Julian away from all inner unrest and strife into religious ecstasy Maximos conducted him thither There he received his new revelation, which was modeled upon Schopenhauer's philosophy² Schopenhauer had felt and seen that the will to live was the

² It may be well to mention here that the prominent German Ibsen scholar Roman Woerner will admit no influence from Schopenhauer in *Emperor and Galilean* In the first volume of his book on Ibsen he opposed especially the Frenchman Ehrhard who had sought to relate the entire work to Schopenhauer I am by no means willing to believe that Ibsen has merely translated a philosophic system into drama But that Schopenhauer's ideas together with various other philosophies contributed thought stimulation and sometimes form I hold to be beyond a doubt

constant, unresting impulse in all existence, the will which was the very basis of life, but it was a blind, unmanageable will, which must be brought under control, and this end could finally be attained only by a self subjugation which ended in Nirvana. Thus Julian now dreamed about being lost in God and becoming dead to life, and his keyword was found in Schopenhauer's paradox "That which is, is not, and that which is not, is." Thereby the contradiction between thought life and actual life was wiped out, and it became possible to reconcile the two opposing impulses in human existence, the enjoyment of life and the subjugation of self.

In his ecstasy Julian soared above Schopenhauer. He would unite in himself all the powers of life, and develop a new race which should know nothing of the struggle. These were thoughts and questions that had tormented Ibsen long, and that now appeared in new forms. It was Kierkegaard's conflict between the æsthetic and the ethical view of life which now tried to find a solution. By a natural combination he carried over into Julian the contrast between "Hellenist" and "Nazarene" with which Ibsen had been familiar from his youth through Heinrich Heine, the same contrast which the Saint Simonists had characterized by the words "flesh" and "spirit." It was this contradiction which Ibsen now set up under the names "Emperor" and "Galilean," the lord of this world and the Lord of the next world, and it was this which gave the drama its title, *Emperor and Galilean*. He wished that they should no longer be at strife, should no longer strangle each other. There should be freedom for the flesh as well as for the spirit. All contradictions should be harmonized in "the Third Empire."

The idea of the Third Empire, the new world which was to arise from the conflict between the opposing powers in life, had its root in precisely that Neo Platonism to which both Libanios and Maximos belonged, and which gained power in all Christian mysticism in the Middle Ages. In this dream, longing went beyond the things that the human mind can grasp. Some of the most large minded philosophers of progress at the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century took up the thought again. It fell in very naturally with Hegel's dialectics which constantly strove to bring two opposites over into a higher unity, and it even found a place in Comte's positivism. Ibsen was thus closely in harmony with the thought of his times, when he pointed forward to the Third Empire. In the great revolutionary oration which he let Brand deliver as he closed his church with the intention of leading the Christians out into the battle of life, he had already expressed his longing for union between the joy of life and a lifting up to God.

But, since the attempt at union had failed in Brand's case, Ibsen had to let Julian ask "How shall people attain to the Third Empire?" And here he stood before the puzzling question of the will. Was it a will within man, or was it a will over man, that held control? Did man have power of choice, or did he not? It was a question which the new natural science had forced more strongly upon people than ever before. Earlier it had concerned itself with religion, with the relation to God, now it concerned itself with every single step in life. Philosophical determinism pressed forward powerfully. But the human spirit protested and struggled for freedom. While Ibsen was preparing his collection of poems, in the spring of 1871, he wrote a

little poem which was in a way a by-product of his work on Julian, a poem about Judas—one who like Julian stood balanced between heaven and hell, and who with his actions served both powers. The poem closed with the question "But what if Judas had not willed it so?"

Julian's question received the answer that he must take "the way of freedom," but that it was identical with "the way of necessity." He saw upon the wall a hand which wrote "Thou shalt and thou must", but he rose in revolt "I defy necessity I will not serve it I am free, free, free!" And so the question still remained. Did he do what he wanted to—or what he must do? Could he will anything aside from what he must will? Maximos, who proclaimed the Third Empire, said that he believed in a unity which reconciled freedom and necessity. But Ibsen admitted that, while he worked on Julian, he became "in a certain sense a fatalist." It was the tragedy in the life of Julian that what he struggled against he served to promote. He became exactly what Eduard von Hartmann taught every man was—a tool of higher powers. Yet he must himself carry the responsibility for everything that he did.

The whole of this thought content in *Emperor and Galilean*, the spiritual conflict with its great questions and dark answers, is in reality all gathered in the first three acts, those which Ibsen had first thought of as a part by itself and called "Julian and the Friends of Wisdom." Following this, there was to be a part with the title "Julian's Apostasy," showing how Julian fell first from the Emperor and then from Christ. The third part was to show us "Julian on the Emperor's Throne" in the futile war against Christianity.

The latter part of the work presented increased difficulties to Ibsen. The rising action of the drama had been written under inspiration, while he himself felt the power of both the doubt and the ecstasy which he permitted Julian to go through, and these first three acts have indeed a power which grips us. Although the effect is somewhat weakened by the fact that some of the scenes and conversations are too long, and that the words have not always their full striking power, yet these acts possess the elements which make them genuine drama, they are filled with suffering and life, with a mighty spiritual crisis. The matter that followed was written more as a task. In reality Ibsen had hardly anything new to say about the questions which determined life for Julian, and he no longer wrote so freely, he became more and more guided by his historical sources.

The first part, as we have mentioned, he had written in a period of a month, about New Year, 1871. Later he found new books for reference, especially the great work—or at least a part of it—about the Church and the Roman Empire in the fourth century, by the Frenchman, Albert de Broglie (1859), and in the summer of 1871 he rewrote the entire three acts—in such a way, however, that the foundation remained unshaken. With the second part he labored far into the summer of 1872, he had already made a fair copy for printing and had begun work on the third part, when he suddenly—this was in October—saw as in a vision how it all could and should have been written. Now the inspiration came upon him anew, with fervent power he threw himself upon the completed second part and made it entirely over. This making over was a dramatic masterpiece, the most remarkable evidence we have of

The decline was greater still in the section which now became the second and last, and it is a decline in both artistic form and spiritual content. Ibsen wrote this part in barely three months in the winter of 1872-73, building it on the plans which he had previously made, and he did not, unfortunately, write it over again. It was divided into five acts, written precisely in accordance with the plan he had discarded for the earlier section—each single act cut up into three or four separate bits. We do not meet Julian in a mighty dramatic struggle concentrated into great moments. Instead, there is a slow process of torture prolonged into scene after scene, especially in the first three acts. Moreover, Julian himself is so inferior that he does not enlist our sympathy as he did before.

In the first half of his work Ibsen had followed Julian sympathetically, and had given a presentation which undoubtedly was built on the historical sources, but which employed these both critically and freely. It is strange to see how, in the second half, he accepts anything and everything that Julian's enemies have said about him, indeed that he often gives it a still worse interpretation than Christian contemporaries thought of doing. In the first part Julian was greater than cold historical research could make him, in the second part he is suddenly much smaller.

This is true not only of his historical career, but also of the innermost life of his soul. He has now begun to think more about himself than about the truth he fights for. He seems to go about playing a rôle, for him it is not a matter of being, but of seeming to be, he wants flattery and lip service. We hear many platitudes about wisdom, but we see extremely little of what the content of wisdom should be. Julian, who formerly had come to

hate everything that bore the name of books and writings, now goes about wishing to recreate the world with the writings he has put together. It is a change in him which undoubtedly has an historical basis to build on, but which Ibsen has made no attempt to explain. To be sure, many things in his inner life are well comprehended and deeply understood—especially how Julian must more and more be filled with contempt for people. But the thought is presented in small dribblets, not in grand visions, and therefore it does not grip us.

Finally, then, he breaks away from all doctrinal controversy, and wishes again to go out and win the world through battle. This gives more progress and life to the drama as well, again the conflict rises to greater heights. In this conflict Julian falls, and it is therefore that Ibsen has found it necessary to write this second part. He has wanted to show us how the downfall completed itself within Julian himself—how Julian saw more and more clearly that he could not win—how he had to acknowledge within himself that a great and powerful spirit lived in the Christians, the Galileans—how he still tried to remain blind to this truth, but was consumed by a new inner strife, and at last gave up. He was too small for the struggle he had raised. Nemesis overtook him.

At the time that Ibsen finally began to work in earnest on *Emperor and Galilean*, he wrote to his publisher "The positive world philosophy, which critics have so long demanded of me, they will find here." Immediately afterwards he wrote to Brandes who had asked him to "hang out his colors." "This drama will be, in a way, my colors." He wished to write his life program, and many years later, in a speech in 1887, he pointed back to his

program in *Emperor and Galilean*, that which he had expressed in the term, the Third Empire. He meant, he said, that what we now understood by politics and society would die out, and that instead there would appear "a unity, on which, for the time being, is conditioned the happiness of humanity." In the same way he thought that "poetry, philosophy, and religion will be welded together into a new category and a new power, concerning which we who now live cannot at best have any clear idea." This last was indeed true of all that he had said about the Third Empire—it was impossible to attain to any clear idea of it. One is almost forced to say, that the work which was intended to express his positive view of life closes in a question much more enigmatic than any of the works with which he himself meant only to raise questions. Here, too, he became the great questioner, who forced the questions on people's attention, but who let them find the answers for themselves. For opposing thoughts were forever at war within him.

The publication of *Emperor and Galilean*, in October, 1873, did not set opinion against opinion in the same way as *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, and *The League of Youth* had done. There was no resulting fire of controversy. But it invited discussion and interpretation, and the riddle in it was read in many various ways—in newspapers and periodicals, in lectures and in discussions. People generally were at that time inclined to interpret it in a Christian spirit, the Third Empire of which Ibsen spoke they took as a prophecy of eventual victory for Christianity on earth. This had not been his own intention. It is true that he might say with Julian, about Christ: "He who has once been under His power—I think he can never be quite free." And one cannot fail to notice

that the religious power in Christianity is portrayed with much deeper understanding and experience than paganism, the spiritual strength, the enthusiasm of the Christians, Ibsen has taken out of himself. Yet it is not a Christian spirit that sustains the work. The unyielding, merciless world will, which employs Julian and all others as its tools, is certainly related to both the Hebrew and the Calvinistic God, but it has also been given the stamp of the stern natural law which the new science set up as master of the world. Ibsen submitted to the stronger power—this was religious self-subjugation, and at the same time he still raised revolt. He could not help dreaming of a realm where the human spirit should win freedom within the compulsion by the world ruler, a future perhaps far distant, but not too far for him to feel in league with it, when the human and the superhuman should come together and be one. He had a dream and a longing that reached far beyond the life in which he was placed. But it was not a longing that led away from human life and sought its hopes in another world. He wished, rather, to draw the great and the beautiful down to the people on earth. It was not Christianity. But it was religion.

Chapter Seven

POWER AND HONOR

“**A**S Emperor Julian stands at the end of his course, and everything collapses about him, there is nothing else which bows his spirit so deeply as the thought that all he has won is to be remembered with respectful acknowledgment by clear and cool heads, while his opponent, rich in love, dwells in warm, living human hearts”

This Ibsen recalled in a speech delivered before the Norwegian students the year after *Emperor and Galilean* had been published. Renan had shown clearly, in his book on the Life of Christ, that the true greatness of Jesus had consisted in winning a love which did not die even though he himself died. This struck Ibsen. He said in his speech to the students that, when he let Julian feel that the worst of all was to lack love, it had “proceeded from something experienced—it had its origin in a question which I have sometimes put to myself down there in my loneliness”

He had experienced many disappointments in life, both of those which were evident to all, and of those which were secret. Many times he had thought that he gave the best he owned of his talents, of his heart's blood, and then his people had not accepted it, had turned coldly away. Still more deeply it had cut into his soul when he himself felt that he had not succeeded as he wished, when his work did not give himself in full truth. But

now he had somehow passed the steepest part of the hill. He had gained control of his own talent, and he seemed to feel warmth and gratitude streaming toward him. He was no longer so lonely. He had entered into a bond of sympathy with his people, had indeed won sympathy far beyond them.

Arne Garborg described his position in 1873 thus: "He is read with interest, nay, almost with avidity, his books are snatched away with a rapidity which is otherwise unknown under our literary conditions, indeed, if it is but rumored that a new book from his hand is to be expected, the public feels an intensity of anticipation that sometimes borders on fever, and when the book has come and is read, nothing else is talked about for a long time, within all circles where such interests flourish at all."

Garborg made the reservation, however, that Ibsen was not yet loved, not popular. He was too "negative." He did not give people works of beauty in which they could rejoice, he was a problem writer. Garborg himself thought it a mark of spiritual weakness to remain cold to Ibsen for such a reason, and yet he would not advise people to attach themselves too closely to the great poet. "For with all his wealth of thoughts, Ibsen has really nothing to give. He is himself only a seeker." He was a doubter. His works lacked serenity and inner balance, and if in this respect he was indeed in harmony with his times, he could for that very reason not win the people of his times. Garborg could therefore give one of the puzzling speeches in *Emperor and Galilean* an amusing turn by directing it against Ibsen himself: "What he is, that he is not, and what he is not, that he is." He was against his age, because he was with it.

But it is precisely in these qualities, which Garborg used as

arguments against Ibsen, that his true greatness appears. He did not make people happy, but he shook them up. He brought unrest to the conscience, storm to the world. He forced people to self-examination and truth. It is possible that one may—at least afterwards—come to love him who thus disturbs and chastises, but that is not the main point. Ibsen made all the greatest life questions into personal questions for each individual man, he introduced them into our minds by creating living people, who fought their battle before our eyes, indeed, who seemed to make themselves a part of us. Thereby he became a living force in his age. And who can desire more for himself than to be such a living force?

He was given many outward evidences of how different his position was now from what it had been ten years earlier. When his collection *Poems* came out in the spring of 1871, the publisher dared to send it out in an edition of full 4000, and yet there was soon need for a new printing. The big and expensive work *Emperor and Galilean*, likewise printed in 4000 copies, was sold out as soon as it came into the market, so that a new printing of 2000 copies had to be made at once, even before the end of the year 1873.

At the same time there arose a demand for his older works, those which had been published before *Brand*. *Love's Comedy* came out in both a third and a fourth printing during the seventies, and now at last, at the close of 1873, it was played at the Christiania Theater. *The Pretenders* came out in a new edition in 1870 and soon reached five printings, it was presented at the Royal Theater in Copenhagen (January, 1871).

In December, 1873, Ibsen got out the second edition of *The*

Vikings at Helgeland It was then more than fifteen years since it first came out, but now only three weeks passed between the second and third printings, and thereupon followed one printing after another Now the play won recognition in Denmark as well Twice it had been rejected by the Royal Theater, now the theater took it up of its own accord, and played it in the spring of 1875 In Stockholm it was presented toward the close of the same year

Lady Inger of Östråt appeared in a new edition at Christmas, 1874 Ibsen had completely rewritten the play, making it more concise in form and deeper in spiritual portrayal, and he had subdued the nationalism in it, striking out all expressions of hatred against the Danes The battle cry, "Away with the Danes," had become, "Away with the foreign noblemen! Away with the council's servants!" Nevertheless, it was not successful in Denmark, but the Christiania Theater presented it at the celebration of the dramatist's birthday in 1875, the twenty fifth anniversary of his first book, and the Dramatic Theater in Stockholm presented it in the fall of 1877

Thus the works of his younger days were revived In 1874 he himself went over *Peer Gynt* anew, arranged it for the theater, and had Eduard Grieg prepare music for it It was the enterprising theater manager, Ludvig Josephson, who finally, in 1876, had it presented at the Christiania Theater, with a staging which far surpassed everything that had yet been seen at that theater in the line of stagecraft and scenery, and it was a huge success It was Josephson, too, who the next year gave *The Vikings* a magnificent setting In October, 1876, this drama became the opening play at the new Norwegian Theater in Bergen It had now become profitable to play Ibsen

In 1872 old Minister Riddervold, immediately before quitting the Government, had refused to grant Ibsen a new traveling stipend. But Ibsen could safely say "I do not feel that my honor is in the slightest degree affected, the Norwegian Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs, for that matter, is not able to affect my honor." He had already attained so high a place in general public esteem that he must soon have enough, and more than enough, of public honor.

In the following years, the Norwegian Committee for the World Exposition in Vienna made him Norwegian judge of the art division there, and he had to undertake the representation of Denmark as well. The two summer months that he spent in Vienna, 1873, were strenuous, but instructive, he did his work conscientiously, and a new realm opened before him here, in the cultural work and artistic talent of eastern Europe, especially of Russia.

It was during his stay in Vienna that his old wish for a Norwegian honorary title was fulfilled, on the day of King Oscar II's coronation he became a knight of St. Olaf "for literary merit." Two years later King Oscar sent him the Oscar Medal with a personally written letter of appreciation, on the occasion of his twenty fifth anniversary as an author. Two years after that, in 1877, when Uppsala University had its four hundredth anniversary, it made him an honorary doctor of philosophy, and he always liked, afterwards, to be addressed by the title of doctor. He had also become more dignified in appearance, instead of the elegant short velvet jacket he had begun to wear a long black coat, so that when he came into the Alps, the Tyrolese girls mistook him for a Catholic priest, kissed his hand, and asked for his bless-

ing He was amused by this, but on the whole he endeavored to become, or appear, as correct a gentleman as possible While he sat ardently engaged in the work of recasting the original second part of *Emperor and Galilean*, in the fall of 1873, he diverted his thoughts by scribbling drawings of his fine decorations Such matters occupied his mind and brought him pleasure

While he had thus attained full victory in Norway and the other Scandinavian countries, he was also gaining some small foothold in countries where he could not be read in his own language Especially was this true in Germany

It chanced that he and Germany began to move toward each other at the same time, from different directions Ibsen carried within him a deep rancor against Germany since the war with Denmark about South Jutland, and the whole of Germany's heedless power policy, as Bismarck guided it, was deeply repulsive to him He made no secret of this feeling, either, and after his collection of poems came out in 1871, he was harshly criticized in a German periodical for his "*Schmah und Hohnreden gegen Deutschland*" He defended himself by saying that it was not the German people he hated, he hated only "the idea, the principle, the system" But he held fast to his Scandinavian national politics, and when Björnson the year after raised a demand for a shifting of "signals" in the relation to Germany, Ibsen aired his indignation in a bitter satiric poem against "the weather vane" [Björnson] and the new "pan Germanism" It is perfectly evident, too, that he did not like the spirit in Germany during these years, that he felt himself to be a stranger there But just now, and especially while he was working on *Emperor and Galilean*, it began to be clear to him how much of mental stimulus he had

during this time received from German intellectual activity. He felt as if he had now progressed from a "national view" to a "racial view." He included Germany in this patriotic feeling, and *Emperor and Galilean* seemed to bring him at once into the midst of German issues. The drama became in his own opinion "more timely" than he had dreamed it would be, because it fell in with the new German Kulturkampf with all its questions of Church and State, Christianity and the intellectual life. He was writing now not merely for his countrymen and other Scandinavians, but for Germans as well, and certainly the fact that Germany began in some small degree to open its doors to his writings helped to overcome his old antipathy.

The first German translation of any of his books was published in February, 1872, when a business man, P. F. Siebold, finally got out *Brand*. In the translation, however, so much of what was characteristic of the author had disappeared that the book could not make any great impression. Nor did the biographical sketch which Siebold had published in the *Illustrierte Zeitung*, in 1870, help much. It was the critic Adolf Strodtmann, of Flensburg, who won the first considerable victory for him in Germany. He published both *The Pretenders* and *The League of Youth* in German in 1872, he wrote with enthusiasm and understanding about Ibsen in his sketches from Danish intellectual life in *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, and he published the sketches in book form in 1873—*Das Geistige Leben in Danemark*, for which he had also translated various poems by Ibsen. New translations of *Brand* came in 1874 and 1876, and the theaters began playing Ibsen dramas. This led Ibsen to secure the help of Emma Klingensfeld in Munich in getting out "German original editions."

and thus he published *The Vikings at Hælgeland* and *Lady Inger of Östråt* in German in 1876. The Royal Theater in Meiningen played *The Pretenders* in 1875, and in June, 1876, they brought the play to Berlin. Ibsen himself was invited to be present at the first presentation in Berlin, and he was made both proud and happy by the applause with which the play was received. Time and again he had to come forward and bow. Afterwards Duke Georg of Meiningen invited him to his castle, and at parting gave him the cross of the Saxon Ernestine family order of knight-hood. In April of the same year the Royal Theater in Munich had played *The Pretenders* with success, from there it went on to other German theaters, the most important event being the presentation at the Burg Theater in Vienna with Charlotte Wolter in the leading rôle. Yet all this was merely preliminary, in Germany Ibsen was still but one of many, and most of the theatrical reviewers wrote slightly of him. But he was on his way toward victory.

In England one man in particular strove to make Ibsen known, namely, Edmund Gosse. While Gosse was on a tour to the North Cape in Norway, in the summer of 1871, a fervently enthusiastic bookseller in Trondheim, H. L. Brækstad, fairly forced *Brand* and Ibsen's poems upon him. He said later that it was a "day of good fortune" to him when he first spelled his way through *Brand*, and he later became a faithful advocate for Ibsen in England. First he wrote an account of *Poems* in *The Spectator* for April, 1872, and later in the same year of *The Pretenders* and of *Peer Gynt*, and the next year accounts of other plays. In John Morley's periodical, *Forerightly Review*, he had in January, 1873, a full article about "Ibsen the Norwegian Satirist." He de-

clared that Ibsen had qualifications for becoming a "world poet," and that his works would soon win "the homage of Europe" Gosse himself translated a couple of poems and extracts from various works of Ibsen. The first complete book of his in English was, strange to say, *Emperor and Galilean*, which Miss Catherine Ray published in 1876. Two years later followed—and this may seem equally strange—the first act of *Caithne* translated by A. Johnstone, but this translation was not put on sale. Thus one can hardly say that it was Ibsen's most excellent work that was presented to English readers, and there were still but few in England who gave any attention to the new Norwegian poet, a long time was to pass before he won success there.

One other small step outside of the Germanic world he had already taken. Mademoiselle Leo Quesnel wrote a short article about him in a French periodical in 1874. It was, however, more prophetic of the future that the fine critic, Madame Charles Vincens, best known by the literary name *Arvède Barine*, a lady who kept herself well informed on foreign literary production, wrote sympathetically about *Brand* in *Revue bleue*, 1877. She was also to assist later in making Ibsen known in France. It was especially remarkable that a Polish critic of Swedish ancestry, Count Lars von Engeström, the translator of Tegnér, published a small book about him in Warsaw in 1875 (*Henryk Ibsen, poeta norwesk*)—the first entire book about Ibsen published anywhere in the world.

Thus Ibsen's star rose higher and higher, and a sense of happiness welled up in him. His self confidence grew, and he found courage to attempt a journey home. Yet he was uncertain and of divided mind when finally, in July, 1874, he set out for Nor

way He did not clearly know whether it would be a mere summer visit or the introduction to a permanent residence Despite all that he had heard and seen, he was not certain of the attitude of his own people toward him

He settled in Oslo, in the heart of the city, and remained there for two and a half months, except for the week or more in August which he spent at the international congress of archæologists in Stockholm He probably cared more for the festivities than for the scholarship there. In Oslo he moved chiefly among his old "Hollander" friends He attended a party in the home of Chr Friele, editor of *Morgenbladet*, and he had pleasant times "I have been met here," he wrote on September 16, "with extraordinary good will from everyone All former antagonism has disappeared" He declined all public entertainments offered him except the banner procession of the Students' Association on September 10 The same evening he was in the Christiania Theater while *The League of Youth* was being played, and he was then called forward amid great applause A few days later he was again in the Christiania Theater to see one of his own dramas, *Love's Comedy*, which the theater had earlier refused This was clear enough evidence of how everything had changed

On the day that the students held their banner procession, they sang a song to him, written by the school principal, Gjertsen, expressing thanks and a three fold "Welcome home!" Ibsen responded with a speech which was both "an account" and "a confession" It is clear that he felt a desire to account both for himself and for his writings, he wanted both to explain why it had been necessary for him to write as he had done, and to declare

that there was nothing he wished more warmly than to be intimately united in sympathy with his countrymen

He felt he had now met a friendliness which involuntarily released pent up feelings. With the same desire to confess to friends, he wrote half a year later the preface to the new edition of *Catiline*. With this revision of the forgotten work of his youth, he wanted to celebrate the twenty fifth anniversary of his career as an author. By working first on *Lady Inger of Ösnåt*, and then on *Catiline*, he refreshed in his own mind memories of old conflict, and he looked back on the past in a mood of mildness and reconciliation. He felt that he stood "at the close of a period" in his life, and I wonder if he did not for a while believe that the time of his struggle was over.

Chapter Eight

A CORPSE IN THE CARGO

THE blaze in his spirit did not subside so readily. There was within him a force which constantly dug the spurs into his mind—an irrespressible desire to ask questions, to penetrate behind the outer surface, to seek harmony between life and spiritual demand—a conscience which was never satisfied with any thing less than full personal truth.

Even the stay in Norway, peaceful though it seemed, sowed seeds of unrest in him. A conflict was brewing in the country, primarily political and social, but in part intellectual also. The Government opposed the Storting, Right opposed Left. The want-of-confidence vote of 1872 opened war between the State powers, and the campaign of 1873 divided the people into hostile parties. Björnson had thrown himself into the controversy as one of the leaders on the liberal side, when Ibsen returned home, he was hailed as the poet of the conservatives. His "Hollander" friends now stood in the front ranks on the conservative side, and the group of friends who honored him by gathering for a banquet on his birthday in 1875 were conservatives. This was not so strange after his writings of the last few years, and even while Ibsen was at home in 1874, he constantly spoke like a thorough conservative. He seemed, said Jonas Lie in a letter, to have become a man "wholly in favor of Bismarck's social and disciplinary theories."

But even though he was thus politically lined up with the conservatives, it bothered him to be appropriated by any one party. If there was anything he could not be, it was a party man. He did not want any kind of restraint on his freedom, and he saw how the conservatives were turning against intellectual freedom, against freedom of thought in religious and scientific questions. It was during his summer at home that the struggle about J. E. Sars's professorship raged, and when he heard, or read, the address delivered by one of the professors on matriculation day, with its strong warning against giving the new philosophy of positivism and materialism a foothold in the University, or when he saw the protests in *Morgenbladet* against making Sars a professor because he was a free-thinker, then he became afraid of his friends. For it was exactly such freedom he wanted. Perhaps he did not think it a mere laughing matter that the socialists at the same time came forward with their agitation, he could catch glimpses of new thoughts which here presented themselves with prophecies of a new social structure.

In view of such differences Ibsen could not, despite all the friendship and honor tendered him, feel rightly at home in Norway. He had to go away to avoid being ringed in and bound anew. Though his spirit could rejoice for a time in peace and rest, he soon felt that he must go out into the conflict again. In the great readjustment period which he had gone through he had gathered strength and new courage, and it was impossible for him to remain in the long run with a conservative opposition party. In the next two years he shifted his position. In 1874 he had applied to the Norwegian Government, when he tried for the first time to have his poet's stipend increased, in February, 1877,

he wrote to the opposition leader, Johan Sverdrup, and asked him to take up the motion. He wrote frankly, this last time, that he had no hope of attaining his wish unless the Storting majority, the liberals, helped him. He could not have turned his appeal in that direction if he had not himself felt more and more strongly drawn over to the liberal side. At the same time, he ended his subscription to the conservative newspaper *Morgenbladet*, and took the liberal paper *Dagbladet* instead. He did not want to be "the poet of the conservatives" any more. There was revolt in him.

He no longer wanted to live in Dresden. He had made his home in that city for nearly seven years, but had always been very much alone there, he had no association with Germans, and few Scandinavians came that way. He began to feel that he was too much shut off from the world. As his son must, in any case, change school, he moved to Munich in the spring of 1875, and there he came to feel much happier. "There," he once wrote, "I feel that I am in my own intellectual home." Life came closer to him. Many young Norwegians and other Scandinavians went to Munich, especially painters who began to break away from the old romantic taste in art and to seek new ways with bolder aims. Here, too, he could meet German literary people of a spirit other than that which dominated German politics. Of especial importance was his association with the novelist Paul Heyse. With a few such friends he often met for his morning beer in Hotel Achatz near Maximiliansplatz, and once a week there was a meeting of a small literary society which called itself The Crocodile—where Ibsen met, among others, the theater director Franz Grandaur, who did much toward having his dramas

presented at the Hoftheater. On the whole, he found in Munich many people who were openly receptive to all that filled his own thoughts, and who, at the same time, drew him farther into the questions and conflicts of the day. The German people were in the midst of hard struggles. The issues of the Kulturkampf were most sharply defined just at the time that Ibsen moved to Munich, and there was almost an intellectual civil war up to the end of the seventies. The struggle which accompanied the formation of the Socialist party in 1875 went still deeper, and almost threatened to break up organized society itself. Ibsen could not live in the midst of all this without having his spirit set in vibration. The impulse to criticism, social and moral, arose in him with new power.

Georg Brandes helped to urge him on and, in doing so, gave back something of what Ibsen himself had given.

Ibsen's controversial writings had been one of the forces that caused the ferment in Brandes's mind, they had helped to teach the young critic how present day writing must take hold of the vital problems of life and make its work a part of the contemporary struggle. Brandes had first recoiled from both *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, later he understood that something of what had repelled him was in reality the greatest element in these works, and with his clear analysis he brought Ibsen's ideal of the poet's function even more strongly to the fore, so that it became a new incitement to Ibsen himself. Both began to feel that they must go into battle together.

In 1874 Brandes, wishing to start a periodical which should further his program for literature and criticism, asked Ibsen to join him. Ibsen answered by admonishing him to give the peri-

odical as wide a scope as possible, to think not only of Danish or even Copenhagen conflicts, but to let it embrace all the Scandinavian countries. It was apparent that Ibsen wished to have a part in the fight, but also that he wanted a fight on a broad battle front. In the spring of 1875, after the periodical *Det Nuttede Aarhundrede* (*The Nineteenth Century*) had been coming out for half a year, he laid a plan to "discuss the intellectual movements of the day" in a series of rhymed letters to the editor. Not more than two of these rhymed letters were written, but they show us clearly what way Ibsen was going.

He had just then been invited to come to a new Scandinavian Students' meeting in Uppsala, and Scandinavianism blazed warmly within him at the time, so that he wrote a poem for the meeting, a poem "To Sweden." The call for union in the poem was not new, and it was not new, either, that Ibsen admonished youth to look forward, not back. But there was a new tone of hope in this poem, entirely unlike that which had been heard in his poems before. He seemed to hear the voice of a new era, and it called on him to join

*New-tuned songs of spring upwelling
In our age we hear,
Murmured melodies are swelling—
Quick the singer's ear
Hosts of young men are the singers—
Theirs the task to be
Of the message new the bringers,
To a folk set free*

Immediately after writing this poem he composed his first rhymed letter to Brandes, that which he called "Far Away"

(*Langt Borte*), and in it he apologized for his song by saying that it was born of "a moment of faith between his doubts" Truth to tell, he really believed no more now than formerly in the presence of will and courage to act among the young people at home, he seemed to see in the festal procession "the phantoms of dead ages and men"; from out of the fog of phrases and the smoke of festivities arose before him "a ghost of the world's history," and great achievements became nothing but a dream Within himself, however, there burned a will to tear his people out of the dream and call it to action He closed his new poem with a question which was at the same time an admonition

When shall we be from our drowsiness stirred

By the century's soul and the century's watchword?

He already carried a hope that *he* was to be the great awakener, that this was his "singer's task" And his question turned into a cry in the next rhymed letter Almost half a century before, the young Henrik Wergeland had cried out the impatient question "Why does humanity move so slowly forward?" There was not so fresh a courage, there was more of apprehension and anxiety, in the question which Ibsen now raised "Why is humanity so strangely depressed?" But there was the same wish to clear away the obstructing powers, and Ibsen found them much more deep in the human soul than Wergeland had done For Ibsen saw enough of "progress" about him, he saw "Europe's steamboat" moving forward at full speed But he also saw that the inner life did not correspond to the outward progress, and he called out his terrible warning cry, "I think we are sailing with a corpse in the cargo!"

Much cleverness has been wasted on the interpretation of

this phrase In reality it is not difficult when one sees it in connection with other things of the same sort that Ibsen has written It had its origin in the same mood as that in which he began to write *Brand* At that time, too, he spoke about a corpse which the age carried—all the dead past to which his people tried to give a spurious life We meet the same thought now ten years later in the poem "Far Away," in which he speaks of the "ghosts" which he saw reappear in the youth of the Scandinavian countries But this vision of corpses and specters had now attained a much wider significance for him than it had two years ago Now it was not only with the great national dreams of the past that the contemporary generation deluded itself It carried a whole load of old traditions, dead ethical and religious ideas which actually had no room any longer in the new society, ideas from which the intellectual development of the present had sapped the very foundations These traditions had become lies and abhorrent strangling powers

This was the thought which now rose more and more strongly in Ibsen, and which brought a wholly new production from him, a series of dramas which have usually been called social plays, but which should rather be called social-ethical plays, for it was not against society itself or against the social structure they were directed They had it as their object to show how the old morals of society had turned themselves about and arrived at the direct opposite of the moral standards which free and honest people in our times must adhere to All sorts of moral "ghosts" appeared to Ibsen in mortal combat with genuine moral truth, and this combat became drama with him It was the old ethical

indignation which broke out anew, but it laid hold on yet more realities of life besides those he had dealt with in *Brand*

At the time he wrote his poem about the corpse in the cargo, in the summer of 1875, he undoubtedly already had in mind the closely related subject which was to become the play *Pillars of Society*. And here I believe that we can clearly show the connection between this and the earlier series of dramas. For he could not well have reference to anything else when, at the close of 1869, after *The League of Youth* was well finished, he told his publisher that he had "a plan for a new serious present day drama in three acts." Four months later he was less sure "My new drama has still not progressed beyond the plan." But the plan was maturing within him, and in October, 1870, he could say "My new work, a play in three acts, has now taken form in my mind, to the extent that I will, one of these days, begin to put it into writing." Nothing came of this. First he was to go through a new great period of integration and reconstruction, and win a wider outlook upon life and life forces. When he had thus gathered new strength, he could throw himself in earnest into the new composition.

Björnson proved to be the first man in the new movement. In the spring of 1875 he sent out, one after the other, two dramas which led directly into the new social and moral literary campaign, *The Editor* and *A Bankrupt*.

Georg Brandes in *Det Nittende Aarhundrede*, reviewing and greeting jubilantly these two remarkable works, pointed out that they were already foreshadowed in *The League of Youth* by Ibsen—in which were found both the bankrupt speculator

(Monsen and Bratsberg) and the misuse of the press (Stensgård) Now Brandes by no means meant that the works of Björnson were in any way indebted to those of Ibsen, and we now know that Björnson had laid the first plan for *A Bankrupt* as early as 1868 The social plays with which he appeared in 1875 were a result of his own inner development Yet it was proper and important to show the connection with the writings of Ibsen, to show how the two authors, in different ways, had arrived at the same point in their work There can hardly be any doubt that the powerful demand for truth in *Brand*, perhaps precisely because he did not like it, had driven Björnson to a sterner searching of conscience, and therefore it was by no means a mere chance relationship that existed between his new works and *The League of Youth* In Ibsen's social plays, as well, there appeared subjects for which the seeds had been present in *The League of Youth*, and it is thus apparent enough that this play in more respects than one pointed the way to the new literature

If Ibsen had formerly helped to drive Björnson forward, it was now Björnson who kindled Ibsen anew After the appearance of *The Editor* and *A Bankrupt* there arose in Ibsen a yet stronger desire to give dramatic form to the ethical indignation which burned within him There is evidence that he felt himself indebted to Björnson and that he recognized a new harmony between them, on the completion of his new drama he sent it to Björnson with a few friendly lines They had then had no communication with each other for more than eight years, and in all that time there had been some feeling of unfriendliness between them We may certainly say that the dramas of Björnson helped Ibsen to find a form for his artistic visions

He discarded verse All his earlier writings on modern themes, with the exception of *The League of Youth*, had been in verse, because he could thus give the freest expression to his anger Now he came to hate and despise verse The poem about the corpse in the cargo was the last thing that he wrote in verse for many, many years "The verse form," he wrote eight years later to an actor, "has done the art of acting a great deal of harm The verse form will hardly find any place worth mentioning in the drama of the near future, for the literary purposes of the future will certainly not be reconcilable with it It will therefore disappear I have myself in the last seven or eight years hardly written a single verse, but have exclusively cultivated the far more difficult art of writing in the plain, truthful language of reality "

He was right in saying that it was more difficult for him to write in prose than in verse Verse flowed very easily from his pen, especially when he was excited, rhyme and rhythm then became his natural form of expression

He met with much more difficulty when, by choice or necessity, he used prose In fact, he could not write prose properly unless he patterned it upon a model, such as the Old Norse saga style It was true also of his verse, at first, that one constantly heard the echo of older poets, Danish and Norwegian—Oehlenschläger, Welhaven, Weigeland But gradually he freed himself, he learned to find words and expressions that were pithy and sonorous, and were moreover wholly and personally his own And quite early it is evident that Ibsen's language is freer, more flexible, than that of the Norwegian poets of the first half of the nineteenth century

This is not only a result of his natural ease in creating form for his thought, it has besides a connection with the development of the literary language he used. For the older Norwegian writers, the Danish literary language had been much more purely a book language than it was for the new generation. P. A. Munch, who had grown up in Gjerpen and Skien, just as Ibsen had done, and who was only seventeen years older than he, could yet say in 1854 that when Norwegians were to write the literary language they must first twist their thoughts into the "written language which deviated from the spoken, in words and expressions." They did not think in that language, and therefore they wrote more heavily, less fluently than the Danes. The generation which was born about 1830 had far less difficulty in this respect. At that time the Danish literary language had established itself in the circles of city-dwellers and people of the official or professional class as a natural spoken language. It had adapted itself to certain characteristically Norwegian accents in pronunciation, and it was felt to be genuinely a mother tongue. Those who now grew up with a knowledge of the Norwegian Danish language did not have to reflect constantly on their written style, they could, with certain exceptions, write as they thought. The work of translating one's thought into a strange form was over.

Thus Ibsen had not the same difficulties to contend with as the writers before him. He was all the time working within his own spoken language. Yet it necessitated long and arduous effort for him to gain full freedom in it, much greater effort in prose than in verse, since prose makes much stricter demands on natural speech. It proved true in Ibsen's case, as it always does,

that there is no art more difficult than that of writing naturally

Björnson was the one who took the lead and showed the way. Earlier than anyone else, he had his language clearly formed in his mind, and with *The Editor* and *A Bankrupt* he won the first great victories for the use of a natural language in present-day drama. Ibsen caught interest from and took advantage of this example, and in reality went still further. Björnson always had some side issue beside the artistic object itself, he sought to reform the language. Ibsen had no object except to write as naturally and bring his language as close to the spoken word as possible. He revised and concentrated, he cut away whatever was casual, whatever had nothing to do with the development of the drama, or he filled the casual words with new dramatic meaning. But the conversation in his new contemporary plays, from *Pillars of Society* on, reflected living present-day speech as perfectly as it had never been done before, and his skill increased from play to play.

The subject matter for *Pillars of Society* was taken directly out of the issues of the day. The corpse in the cargo, the old rotten ethics of society, was given a palpable symbol in the rotten boat which Consul Bernick wanted to send to sea with only sham repairs, and a symbol more timely Ibsen could hardly have found. The agitation about the "Plimsoll Coffins" was thus given dramatic form. Samuel Plimsoll had in 1868 undertaken a hard task in the British Parliament. He sought to have the State interfere against the use of rotten ships which were cold bloodedly sent straight to destruction with the one purpose of getting the insurance money for the owners. In 1873, he finally succeeded in putting through a law to enforce seaworthiness.

But it became evident that the law was too slack, and Plimsoll had to begin a new agitation, this time against still harder opposition, since the law of 1873 had put the people's conscience to sleep again. At last he created a tremendous commotion in the House of Commons on July 22, 1875, he called the owners of the rotten vessels murderers, and the statesmen who supported them, scoundrels, and he was successful in passing a new law.

An echo of this agitation was heard over the whole world, and not least in a seafaring country such as Norway. The last stormy meeting in Parliament was fully reported in Norwegian papers, among others in *Morgenbladet* to which Ibsen then subscribed. The liberal papers took sides with Plimsoll, and it thus happened that *Dagbladet* had a letter from England about the progress of the case, in the same number—that for July 18, 1874—in which it bade Ibsen welcome home to Oslo. A new letter about the case appeared in the paper for September 1, while Ibsen was still in the city. That the question could become heated enough in Norway, too, was made clearly evident the day after, when the Norwegian Veritas, a marine insurance company, held its meeting in Oslo. The meeting discussed the case of a boat which had been declared seaworthy, but which had sprung a leak at sea and had proved to be completely rotten. In September of the next year, Veritas had before it two cases of the same sort, both taken from the summer and fall of 1874, and the report spoke of "poor workmanship," "imperfect caulking," "faulty bolting"—the repairs had only been designed to hide the condition, not to remedy it. Ibsen certainly had a sufficient basis at home when, in Sep-

tember, 1875, he began in earnest to give form to his dramatic attack on social morality

In order to give life to the drama he must take his stand in the society he knew from home, and whereas he had in his mind laid *The League of Youth* in his birthplace, Skien, he found the background for *Pillars of Society* in the little coast town where he had spent so many years of his youth—Grimstad. Not only names of people—Vigeland, Holt, Tonnesen—and of ships—the *Palm Tree*—point thither, but many of the details that fill the drama with a sense of actuality—such as the reminiscences of social life in Grimstad, of boat trips and walking tours, the company of actors in the hall belonging to the sail maker Moller, the actor's wife who remained in town and earned her living by sewing and washing, but was made to suffer by the town talk, the sea-damaged vessels which came into the harbor to be repaired at the docks, and the foreign roustabouts who upset the town. The social problem which we meet in the very first dialogue of the play, where the foreman is warned against agitation among the workmen, Ibsen had also seen for the first time in Grimstad. The last autumn that he was there, in 1849, Marcus Thrane had come to the town to organize a workmen's union. Furthermore he had seen in this small town how an ambitious business man could make a success of bold undertakings. Morten Smith Petersen, who came home from abroad while Ibsen was in Grimstad, managed his mother's business for a while, but had to sell the stock at bare cost, then he set up his own business as shipbuilder and shipowner, founded a bank and a marine insurance company in the town, and finally organized

the Norwegian Veritas. He was a leader in his sphere. He had died in 1872, but his sister still lived, Margrete Petersen, a woman of refined personality, who gave lessons in penmanship and other school subjects.

All these things, which Ibsen remembered from his youth, furnished living touches for his new play. He bound them together with incidents from later times, such as the railroad plans which were so strongly to the fore in Norway in the seventies. But everything served to throw light on the moral and dramatic conflict which was his main subject.

As he proceeded to give form to this conflict, he loaded more and more "lies" on the "pillar of society" whom he sought to portray. While at first he had let his big business man simply work directly to get a railroad to the town, he ended by having the same man originally opposed to the railroad but enthusiastic about it when he had succeeded in buying the land where the road would be laid, this was the business morality which a fine name should conceal. As he went on with his work, Ibsen brought out more and more strongly that this business man, Consul Bernick, has created the foundation for his wealth by a rich marriage, deserting the woman he loved, and Ibsen wished to show how this original lie has left an ulcer in the soul which grows within him, so that the man is driven from one lie to another. He has let the comrade of his youth bear the blame when for a time the business was in financial difficulties, and at last he prepares to send a ship to the bottom with mice and men, in order to get rid of this old friend and clear himself of "scandal", for the thing of importance to him is to save outward honor, even if he gives up the inner truth.

Ibsen, who was himself so much afraid of scandal, could understand such a sequence of action. But at the bottom of his heart he condemned both the fear and the deceit, and in his writing he pronounced judgment. He lets his business man be so shaken up in his conscience that he tears himself loose from the lie, nay, admits it openly to the public on an occasion when he—like Ibsen recently—is honored with a banner procession. It is this inner struggle in Consul Bernick which is the chief theme of the drama. It closes with the battle cry of the new morality: "The spirits of Truth and Freedom—they are the pillars of society." But it was not as a protection for society that Ibsen raised his demand, he thought much more about the individual man than about society, and for the individual it was necessary to be "honest and true toward one's self"—this was what gave true happiness.

Thus the struggle in the drama finds its solution in a positive principle, and—what is well worth noting—a principle that wins out. The man who has sunk deeper and deeper into dishonesty and deceit rises with one bound, makes himself instantly free and honest, quite like the business man in Björnson's *A Bankrupt*. There is a youthful hope and faith in this outcome which gives the entire play a bright aspect, and this effect of brightness is increased and strengthened by the fact that she who forces the crisis to come and the truth to be revealed is returned from America, the land on which the young and the lovers of freedom set their hopes, in which, they dreamed, there was—as the play says—"a loftier sky, a freer air."

With the outcome which Ibsen gave his play, it came to have not a few of the characteristics of what one might call a "folk

play " *Pillars of Society* " is the only one of all his works which directly touches the emotions and calls forth tears. Otherwise his plays usually close in such a way as to disturb the conscience, temper the mind, or incite the will, one may become angry or afraid, one may oppose or agree, there is only one thing one never becomes, and that is soft hearted or tearful—with one exception, *Pillars of Society*. It is as if Ibsen believed that his words of truth must have been suddenly fraught with power to break down the hypocrisy in "this wretched society" or—as he puts it in one of the earlier drafts—"this lying generation." His program was that which he made Lona Hessel proclaim in the first act to "let in some fresh air," and he believed that he would be able to drive the tainted smell of shrouds out of the closed rooms.

He had wished the play to be like a bit of real life moved out upon the stage. Just because he wanted to take hold of life itself, the artistic form must be as fully realistic as possible. In his work to attain this aim he was helped by Björnson, but most of all, certainly, by the German dramatist, Friedrich Hebbel. Hettner had directed him to Hebbel as early as in 1852, but it was only now, when he went to work at realistic contemporary plays, that Hebbel was in full measure useful to him. A German literary scholar (Julian Schmidt) has described what is characteristic of Hebbel, in these words: "He draws the characters, and he invents and carries forward the plot with a consistency which knows no compromise, every step in the action is closely bound up with the fundamental idea he wishes to set forth." Thus Ibsen, too, wanted to build up his drama. But it required hard work for him to make it as perfect as he wished.

We can estimate the labor by the time required for the writing of the play. Usually, when he began in earnest to work on a new drama, it forged its way to completion in two, three, or four months. It was altogether unusual when the double drama *Emperor and Galilean* required more than two years in the working out, and when *Peer Gynt* took nine months. So much the more remarkable it is, then, that he labored with *Pillars of Society* for nearly two years. He could not send it to press before the last of July, 1877.

He recast it again and again. For the first act we know of five different drafts, and yet we can see that he must have made more. And his work aimed precisely at this: to bind together all separate incidents in the play, so that they should belong fully to the main action, to cut away all unnecessary incidents and dialogues, all irrelevant persons, to establish the dramatic sequence more and more firmly from first to last, and to create an unbroken spiritual continuity in each person. We can trace this work in draft upon draft, so that his aim is clearly apparent.

In *Pillars of Society* he worked out the dramatic technique he was to use in all his later plays. In reality it was the old Greek dramatic form that he revived: the drama became one single great catastrophe. He had used this same technique in the one dramatic masterpiece which he had created in his youth, *The Vikings at Helgeland*. From now on he always wrote thus. The thing that happened in the drama was that old sins suddenly revealed themselves and called out a nemesis, an inescapable judgment. Thus the first act must plunge headlong into the crisis, setting truth and hidden sin up against each other. And the artistic test for the author comes in making this natural, free

from effort In *Pillars of Society* we see clearly how Ibsen strove to make the first act natural We must admit that he was not wholly successful, its movement is still a trifle labored But the main theory is clearly worked out through everyday words and dialogues there appears a foreshadowing of conflict which then suddenly breaks out and becomes a life and death struggle

The thing that caused the new social plays of Ibsen to take hold of people with such amazing power was his remarkable ability to translate ethical conflicts into human life, so that we seem always to see people of flesh and blood engaged in breathless struggles about the greatest problems in life The indignation and the ideas were not his alone, but it was he who more than anyone else forced them upon the consciousness of contemporary generations, for in his plays people met their nearest relatives, nay, themselves, struggling with their own conscience He created genuine great drama which is at one and the same time filled with great thoughts and with living people

There came to be, during these years, almost a race between Ibsen and Bjornson to reveal false social morality in dramatic form Bjornson had gone first, not only with the *The Editor* and *A Bankrupt*, but also with *The King*, which came in the spring of 1877 Afterwards he published *Leonarda* and *The New System* in 1879, at the same time that Ibsen published *A Doll's House* But now Björnson was silent—in the field of drama—till 1883, while Ibsen published both *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People* The first part of the new Bjornson drama, *Beyond Our Power*, certainly went more deeply into the religious life than any other play, and possessed a power which raised it to the highest rank in the literature of the world But

meanwhile Ibsen had, with his most recent dramas, stirred up a spiritual storm, greater than either of the two poets had earlier been able to provoke. This he could do because he was able to bring his dramatic thought more consistently into every fiber of the piece than could Björnson.

One must perhaps say that Björnson's characters are often more richly and fully drawn than those of Ibsen, that they have, as it were, more space about them, and they have more freedom of choice in their actions, they are not so mercilessly made to follow a single path. But just this, which in a way may seem more human, makes them less dramatic. The uncanny strength of Ibsen lies in the way he builds up the entire drama and each single character in the drama so that we are forced to admit that everything must be just so, that every man must act precisely in this way. He grips us, and does not release us for a single minute before we have arrived at the inevitable conclusion.

With *Pillars of Society* he still did not make up the head start that Björnson had won, and this play seems somewhat out of date now, partly because it has so much of the "popular" touch in it, and partly because it pales against the austere master pieces which followed. But it was after all with this play that Ibsen won his first great dramatic victory.

The publisher ventured to send it out immediately in an edition of 6000, and yet seven weeks later he had to make a new printing of 4000. At the same time, the play went on the stage in all the theaters in Scandinavia, first in Odense and Copenhagen, then round about in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. It was almost equally successful in Germany. Besides the translation which Emma Klengenfeld made for Ibsen him

self, there came out, in 1878, two other translations. The theaters competed about who should play the drama first. In February, 1878, it was at the same time on the repertoire of five different theaters in Berlin, something entirely unheard of in the theatrical history of that city. Before the year was over, twenty-seven theaters in Germany and Austria had taken it up, and in the next few years it won success wherever the German language was used. In 1879 it was translated into Bohemian, and in 1880 it was played—at a single performance—in English in London.

In Germany, Björnson's *A Bankrupt* had broken the path for this as well as for Ibsen's other plays, and it is clearly apparent that in German estimation and in the German theaters, *Pillars of Society* did not measure up to *A Bankrupt*. Ibsen remained yet for some time in the shadow of Björnson. But *Pillars of Society* fought the first battle for his future in Germany. The prominent theater director, Otto Brahm, has told about the effect of the play on the young people. He was a student twenty-two years old when in 1878 he went to one of the small theaters in Berlin and saw *Pillars of Society*. Many years later he recalled this as his "first strong impression of the theater," "the first intimation of a new world of literature." He felt himself to be dedicated to a new realistic art. The same thing happened to his companion, a man who was also destined to become a great theater director, the young Paul Schlenther. The presentation was a decisive event in his life, a new world and a new art opened before him. Many others had experiences of the same power. It was a revolution that came with Henrik Ibsen.

Chapter Nine

WOMAN AND SOCIETY

“WE do not see woman,” Ibsen lets Consul Bernick say at the close of one of the drafts of *Pillars of Society*. In the final version it is the woman revolutionist in the play, Lona Hessel, who speaks the line and directs it against the men: “You have no eyes for womanhood.” Here it is suddenly the woman herself who rises to accuse society and demand her rights.

Again it was a controversy of the day into which Ibsen threw himself—he needs must incite to revolt. It was just at the time when the woman’s emancipation movement began in earnest. The controversy had been raised by Stuart Mill in his book, *The Subjection of Women*, published in 1869. Georg Brandes translated the book into Danish the same year, and unrest soon made itself felt in Norway as well. In 1871 Mathilde Schjott sent out anonymously the little publication, *The Conversation of a Group of Ladies about the Subjection of Women*, and her aunt, Aasta Hansteen, appeared with her full name as a champion of the “Emancipation,” that is, the liberation of women. The deepest impression was made by Camilla Collett in the series of *Last Papers*, published in 1872, in which she painted, as with her own heart’s blood, the spiritual sufferings of the subjugated woman, and showed how disregard for woman made man himself coarse and brutal in his thinking. Much of this had vibrated as an undertone in her writing ever since *The Governor’s*



SUSANNAH IBSEN, III FOREIGN

This is the reason why *Pillars of Society* was much more of a feminist drama in the first drafts than it finally turned out to be. In these early plans he gaily ridiculed the "domesticity" in which the old fashioned housewives lived, and over against them he placed the emancipated woman, bold in speech and still bolder in action. She would win the battle for truth and liberty because she owned, and was permitted to use, the feminine ability to throw into man's life "a flash of something impulsive and spontaneous in her way of thinking" which had an "awakening and cleansing" effect on man.

Ibsen had a first hand acquaintance with this power of the "illogical" but strong willed woman who fervently hates all conventionality, all social prejudice. He himself had described his wife thus in 1870:

It was the ethical principle in *Pillars of Society* that a man should not seek to become a "pillar of society," but only to be himself, and it was this fundamental idea which filled both the life and the writings of Ibsen, that in all things the primary duty was to "realize one's self," to become a free individual. In a letter to Björnson in the summer of 1879 he described it as his task "to awaken to freedom and self-dependence the individuals—as many as possible." In answer to Björnson's wish that Ibsen should join him in his demand for a "pure" flag, he wrote "There do not exist in the whole of Norway twenty five free and independent personalities. Let the Union sign remain [in the flag], but take the monkhood sign out of the minds, take out the sign of prejudice, narrow mindedness and wrong headed notions, dependence, and the belief in groundless au

thority, so that individuals may come to sail under their own flag. The one they are now sailing under is neither pure nor their own."

What was true for the man, must be equally true for the woman. It was a quiet but poignant complaint that rose like a sigh in *The Pretenders*: "To love, to sacrifice everything, and to be forgotten—that is woman's saga." In *Pillars of Society* appeared the young woman, Dina Dorf, who had courage to defy society, and who would not submit to "its miserable fear of public opinion," "its deadening respectability." She wished only to be natural and she wished—in the first draft of the play—to enter into a free, unconventional marriage with the man she loved, she had learned "to hate promises." She threw off all outer restrictions. She wanted to be free. And what was this Dina Dorf but Svanhild from *Love's Comedy*, only not a Svanhild who permitted "the world to take her," but who bravely took up the fight with the world. A woman of the same nature had been portrayed by Ibsen in Hjørdis in *The Vikings at Helgeland*. It seemed as though he thought that woman could more easily than man raise a revolt against the social conventions which suppressed the free spirit.

And that is exactly what he did think, or came to think. Ideas which had lain as seeds within him from his youth now sprouted into full growth and raised revolt. Camilla Collett had been often in his company in Dresden in 1871, and she was both puzzled and irritated by his old-fashioned way of thinking about woman's place in society. While she was in Munich, in the spring of 1877, she had many arguments with him about marriage and other problems of women. Again she could not help becoming

angered, time and again, by the opinions he defended. Undoubtedly he was now speaking differently from what he thought. He was just then completing *Pillars of Society*, which contained both Lona Hessel and Dina Dorf. But he, no doubt, found it amusing to tease Fru Collett. By contradicting her he succeeded in making her express herself more freely, and he thus gained a deeper insight into a rebellious feminine soul.

Perhaps these conversations with Camilla Collett gave the first impetus to a drama devoted especially to women. Originally he had thought that he could gather his entire attack upon social ethics into the one play, *Pillars of Society*. This was one reason why he had given it so inclusive a title. When he finally struck out so much of that which especially applied to the position and emancipation of women, it was perhaps because he already began to see the subject for a new drama which was to deal directly with woman's revolt.

It was an old subject that now developed in a new form. At the time *The League of Youth* was published, Georg Brandes pointed out that the subordinate theme of the young Fru Bratsberg, Selma, might in itself yield material for a whole new drama, and it was just this that now began to develop in Ibsen's mind. Selma, "the fairy tale princess," had gone about longing for the true fairy tale, but she had always been kept outside. She was not permitted to make her sacrifice, to take part in the struggle of life, she was to be protected from everything that was ugly. At last her longing burst out of her as a bitter complaint. "You have dressed me up like a doll, you have played with me, as you would play with a child. Oh, what a joy it would have been to me to take my share in your burdens! How I

longed, how I yearned, for a large, and high, and strenuous part in life!" But in *The League of Youth* nothing more came of it, it was an outburst, not a drama. Now, eight or ten years later, the outburst took the form of revolt.

A special incident helped to foster the new woman character in his mind. He received from a young Norwegian woman a letter about her unhappiness in her marriage. Strange to say, it was the very same young woman who had once ventured to write a sort of continuation of *Brand*. She had now married in Denmark, and was working her way forward in the Danish world of letters. Ibsen had met her personally when he was in Copenhagen in the summer of 1870, and had given her the pet name "the lark." Later she was in his home in Dresden, and he gave her his advice about the literary work which she was engaged upon. After her marriage she kept up her association with Ibsen, she and her husband met the Ibsens in Munich in 1876, and to Ibsen their marriage seemed like "a doll's house." But not long afterwards the husband became ill, the wife had to work to earn money, and without her husband's knowledge she contracted debts. When he found it out he became angry, and the thing brought about a crisis in their married life. It affected her so strongly that she had to go to a nerve clinic. This last Ibsen heard from the husband, the earlier history he had from the young wife herself.

All this moved him deeply, more and more clearly there arose in his mind the picture of a young, happy hearted woman who secretly assumed burdens for the sake of her husband, who even committed forgery for his sake, who waited expectantly to see how his love should flash out in proud joy when the secret

was revealed, but who by her disappointment was driven out of her marriage

Ibsen knew how such a disappointment can destroy love. He had described it in *Brand*—it was this that separated Agnes from Einar—that he did not have courage and strength to risk his life when there was a question of saving the soul of another. Furthermore, what Ibsen had once read in *The Seducer's Diary* from Søren Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* had undoubtedly burned into his soul. The Seducer here describes the suspense he has created in the young girl: her eye has taken on "a bold, almost foolishly daring look of expectation," "as if it demanded, and was prepared at any moment to behold, something marvelous." This "something marvelous" is what Kierkegaard called "the miracle," and was not each and every woman expecting "the miracle"? The thing that became a momentous question to Ibsen was what the effect would be when "the miracle" did not occur. He thought of it in connection with the violation of law and social custom, and he visualized all the commotion which must follow the boundless demand of woman in conflict with custom and established ethics. Thus the new drama began to stir his thoughts.

He had published *Pillars of Society* in the fall of 1877, and during all of the following winter he had his hands full of business in order to bring the new play on the stage in various countries and to defend his right to the income from it. There was not as yet any international agreement for protection of the rights of authors. In the summer of 1878, then, he settled again in the Alps, in Gossensass in Tyrol, on the south side of the mountain. He had spent several weeks there, in 1876,

while he worked on *Pillars of Society*, and had liked the place. So he now went there again, and after his vacation he did not return to Munich. As his son Sigurd had entered the university that summer, school was no longer a consideration, and in September, 1878, Ibsen moved to Rome. He longed for the warmth of the South.

It was certainly in Gossensass that the new drama took form in his mind, and in Rome he made the first written notations for it, in October, 1878. It is well worth noting that the play as it took shape in Ibsen's mind was not a feminist drama. He himself called it at first simply "the modern tragedy," so great and inclusive did it seem in his mind. What he wished to show was the contrast and conflict between "the natural feelings on the one side and belief in authority on the other," and woman was to him the proper spokesman of "the natural." In *Pillars of Society* he had thrown out the remark, "Your society is a society of bachelor souls." In his notes for the modern tragedy he expanded this into the assertion that present day society "is an exclusively masculine society, with laws written by men and with prosecutors and judges who regard feminine conduct from a masculine point of view." There must necessarily be strife, for "there are two kinds of spiritual laws, two kinds of consciences, one in man and quite another in woman. They do not understand each other." The natural viewpoint of woman, that which forms the justification for each of her deeds, is in the words, "I did it for love's sake." It is unthinkable to her that laws can forbid acts inspired by affection, not to speak of prescribing punishment for them. Therefore the outcome must be that "the wife in the play is finally at her wit's end as to what is right and

wrong", she loses her foothold in society, and she has to flee from a man who cannot tear himself away from the laws of society, cannot with one leap come over to her and offer her "the miracle"

Such was the foundation for the drama which was to become *A Doll's House*. But it was yet a good while before he began writing it. The entire winter of 1878-79 passed, the subject worked within him, but it took time before the ethical antitheses on which he built attained the form of clear human characters. He told his wife later that at first he seemed to see everything as in a mist, but little by little he saw persons who emerged into a stronger and stronger light.

He spent much time by himself throughout the winter, he felt a need to be alone.

"One must steal away from one's family now and then," he once said. He would go to the Scandinavian Club and sit there reading papers from home, and sometimes entering into conversation with people, or he went to meetings and festive gatherings. But everyone could see that he was in a combative mood. One evening after a meeting when he happened to sit for a while drinking Swedish punch, he threw himself upon two Danish theologians with a sharp attack on Christianity and all the dogmas which the clergy used in order to hold the old society together. He grew more and more angry, and when he finally, in the early morning hours, went home, with a young friend at each arm for support, there was no end to his poor opinion of everything in the world—people became more and more miserable creatures, their aims in life became meaner and meaner. One of the two young men, Gunnar Heiberg, wished to comfort him with the

fact that he had at least written great and true things himself, and he quoted from the "Balloon Letter." But Ibsen cried out in depreciation "Verse, verse! Nothing but verse!"

The plans for his drama led him to think more and more of all sorts of feminist problems. We hear that he earnestly encouraged a Danish lady to start a woman's paper, and in January, 1879, he suddenly appeared in the Scandinavian Club with two proposals relating to women members. The first had chiefly a practical aim: it urged that the club should choose a woman for its librarian. The second had a much wider significance: it demanded that women should have the power to vote in the club. This motion raised a stronger opposition than Ibsen had expected, and for the meeting which was held to decide the question, on February 27, he brought a carefully written report. He pointed out that the present situation was a "humiliation" to the women, and that he thought they possessed—like youth and the true artist—"a certain genius of instinct, which unconsciously hits upon the right thing."

There was an old inheritance from romanticism in this way of regarding women; it was this view that had helped him create such woman characters as Agnes in *Brand* and Solveig in *Peer Gynt*. The new element was that the viewpoint now became the basis for demands upon society. It drove Ibsen on to battle, and while he pleaded his cause at the Scandinavian Club, he became so enthusiastic that he forgot his paper, he became an orator, eloquent and powerful. But he lost the motion. Then he flew into a rage. He went to his accustomed place in the usual wine shop, but he would tolerate no one near him except those who had voted for his motion. Later throughout the winter he would



AGNÈS MOWINCKEL AS LLLIDA IN THE REVIVAL
OF "THE LADY FROM THE SEA," IN OSLO, 1928

not speak to the old friends who had voted against him, he refused even to greet them in the street

Great were the joy and surprise, therefore, when, after all, he appeared at the anniversary festival in the club. He was in full dress with all his decorations. He sat down somewhat apart from the others, but all at once he stepped over to the table and made a speech. He began very gently, mentioning that he had recently wished to be of some service to the club, he had wanted to direct into it the new currents of contemporary life, for no one, even here, could escape contact with its great thoughts. But how had they received his gifts? As a burglary, as an attempt at murder! Even women had intrigued and agitated against him. By this time he had talked himself into such a rage that he could hardly control his words. His eyes shot sparks, his lips trembled, he shook his head with its great mane of hair, and he railed at women with stern, almost insolent words, so that at last a Danish countess fainted. Then he grew calmer, but he continued to speak of how contemptible human beings and especially women were, how they always opposed the new thoughts which were to make them greater, richer, better. When he had finished, he took his coat and left. He had found relief.

And now for the first time *A Doll's House* had so come to life in him that he could begin writing. The hot summer months were his working time. It became too sultry in Rome itself, and in the beginning of July he moved to Amalfi, the old coast town on the south side of the peninsula of Sorrento. Even there he did not live in the town itself, but in an old monastery which had been converted into a hotel, perched on a mountain side which ran sharply down to the sea. There he had both air and

a view He rewrote the play three times during the summer, each time making the characters more alive, the plot and conversation more compact, more natural In the first draft there is a direct discussion of "the woman question" But all of that was later cut out It was not theory, but life that the play was to give

To the young woman with whom it dealt he gave the name Nora, and there is a characteristic little story, dated many years later, about the origin of the name Someone asked how he came to choose just this name, and Ibsen promptly answered "Well, you see, her name was not really Nora She was christened Eleonora But at home they called her Nora because she was such a little pet" Both the real name and the pet name he had borrowed from a sister of his early friend, Ole Schulerud, but the little incident shows how intimately he had identified himself with his little "heroine"

One day while working on the play he said abruptly to his wife "Now I have seen Nora She came up to me and put her hand on my shoulder"

"How was she dressed?" asked Fru Ibsen

"She wore a simple blue woolen dress," answered Ibsen gravely

Nora's husband was at first given the name Stenborg It was the same name which he had first used for the lawyer in *The League of Youth* For such a political windmill it was a burlesque name, and as the burlesque proved to be too apparent, the name was changed to Stensgård This time it was to characterize the hard husband But again the meaning was altogether too evident, and the man was given the neutral middle

class name of Helmer, a name which Ibsen remembered from Grimstad. At the same time he was robbed of all marked characteristics. In the first draft he was personally interested in science and art, but he bore evidences of being a selfmade man, and was sometimes rude in his lack of consideration. More and more he was changed into an ordinary husband, no worse and no better than all others. This gave the play greater force of general application.

Late in September, 1879, the play was finished, and three weeks before Christmas it was in the book market. This time the publisher ventured an edition of 8000 copies, and yet he had to make a new printing after one month, and again after three months. A German translation with the title *Nora* appeared in Reclam's *Universal-Bibliothek* even before the end of the year 1879, and was sold by the thousands. Later the book was translated in one country after the other—in Finland in 1880, in England in 1882, in Poland in 1882, in Russia in 1883, and in Italy in 1884. It was soon known throughout the whole world. Perhaps no book in all literature before had made such triumphal progress.

Yet this was nothing to the overwhelming and innumerable victories which the play won at theaters throughout the world. The Royal Theater in Copenhagen was the first to present it, even before Christmas, 1879, with Betty Hennings in the main rôle. In January, 1880, the Dramatic Theater in Stockholm, with Elise Hwasser, and the Christiania Theater, with Johanne Juell, followed, and various companies brought the play about with them to the smaller cities in all the Scandinavian countries. In February it was played in Finnish in Helsingfors, with Ida

Aalberg as Nora, and at the same time in German in Flensburg. The first regular theater in Germany to present the play was the Residenz Theater in Munich, with Marie Ramlo. It was played there March 3, 1880, and Ibsen himself was present to receive the ovation. Immediately after, Hedwig Niemann Raabe played Nora at various theaters in North Germany, in Hamburg, Dresden, Hanover, Berlin. The next year the drama was played in Vienna and, in Polish, in St. Petersburg. In 1882 it was played in Warsaw. But its full victory came at the close of the eighties, from that time on it established itself firmly in the theatrical realms of all the world, was played in every possible language and in all possible places. With this play Ibsen became world famous.

A Doll's House fell like a bomb into contemporary life. *Pillars of Society* made a success in all social classes, among people of different ways of thinking. Although it attacked the prevailing social lies, it had yet so much of the old-fashioned theatrical happy ending that it did not seem too bitter. But *A Doll's House* was merciless, it brought the ethical struggle sternly and uncompromisingly to the point of irreconcilable conflict, it passed sentence of death on the prevailing social ethics. Therefore it roused opposition and created enmity.

Never before had Ibsen stood in the midst of such strife. His new book was discussed with arguments and counter-arguments, in newspapers, in periodicals, in special books—in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Germany. Ministers preached about it in the churches, people spoke of it in their homes and outside of them. They argued about the legal "case" in the play, about whether the man-made laws would in reality have convicted

Nora of forgery. They asked if it was psychologically true and natural that the lark Nora could so abruptly turn away from inherited and acquired morality and become such a revolutionist. But this question—which was indeed the deepest and greatest—had to give way to that which burned most strongly in contemporary readers: was it right, morally right, for Nora to desert husband and children and think only of her own spiritual liberation? She was judged not as a dramatic character, but as a living person. It was in a way the greatest triumph the dramatist could have won. People forgot to ask if Nora had to act as she did, instead, they asked if she ought. About this question the controversy raged fierce and hot, and it made the whole question of feminism burning as never before. *A Doll's House* became the cry of freedom for women generally. Ibsen was hailed, not only as the revolutionary writer for intellectual liberty, but as the women's writer, quite especially, and those who were opposed to revolution, opposed to social and moral upheaval, opposed to woman's emancipation, came to look upon Ibsen as their greatest and most dangerous enemy.

At home, in Scandinavia, he and Bjørnson had by this time given their readers so stern a training that they dared to look the questions he raised squarely in the eye, and there were strong echoes of his demand for liberty. The late seventies had witnessed in Norway a broad progressive movement for free thought and for an insistence on greater truth, in history and natural science, in social and religious questions, in the art of painting. Ibsen had stood at the very forefront of this progressive movement, and had won an authority which now became an advantage to him as a playwright.

It was not so elsewhere in the world. Their opposition was raised with much greater force. Especially remarkable was the reception given *A Doll's House* in Germany. Great theater directors in Hamburg and Vienna gave Ibsen to understand that it was impossible, or dangerous, to present the drama with its unhappy ending. When it was played in Munich in the form which the dramatist himself had given it, there was finally an open argument between those who applauded and those who hissed, and the hissing proved to be a protest against the hard, anti-moral ending. When Frau Raabe was to play Nora, she refused outright to follow the dramatist to the close. "I would never leave my children," she said. Ibsen received a warning that some ambitious translator wished to give the play a new ending, and judged that at least it would be better if he himself performed this "barbaric deed of violence." He changed the ending in such a way that Helmer brought Nora over to the door of the bedroom where she was compelled to look at her children, with the result that she could not tear herself away, but gave up, and remained with her husband. With this new ending, Frau Raabe then played the rôle, but she had not the spirit of Ibsen, and did not succeed in carrying the spectators with her. In Berlin they sometimes laughed in the most tragic places, and Georg Brandes, who was there and saw the play, shook his head. "Germany will never come to understand Ibsen."

It became evident after all that it was precisely with its shocking conclusion that the drama had a future. It was with this ending that Frau Ramlo carried it to victory in Munich, despite all opposition, and a few years later no one would think of playing otherwise than as the author himself had intended. Frau

Raabe now played it thus herself, and won the victory she had not been able to gain in 1880. A younger German actress, Hedwig Wangel, who played Nora in 1892 and who was later given a long series of Ibsen roles, said that *A Doll's House* had "opened the doors to a whole new world for German women." It became a means of intellectual emancipation here as every where else.

With Nora in *A Doll's House* Ibsen created the first of the long series of great rôles which were later to attract so many actors and especially those of the highest caliber, after Nora came Fru Alving, Doctor Stockmann, Hjalmar Ekdal, Rebecca West, Hedda Gabler. It happened more than once that actors, and perhaps especially actresses, thanked Ibsen for the many excellent rôles he had created for them—thinking that they would give him pleasure by saying so. But he only became angry and cut them short. "I have never created rôles. I have written of human beings and human destinies."

Yet it was exactly because he created whole and true human beings that he also created good roles. By so rigorously cutting away all that was "theater," outward form, by merely striving to look deep into the souls of his people, to expose all the most secret movements of their hearts, he forced the actors to do likewise—to strain all their abilities to the very utmost in the work of giving his dramatic characters their full spiritual meaning. Thus Ibsen's plays brought about a rejuvenation and elevation in the art of acting itself, they demanded deeper identification, more fervent self-abandon, stronger truth, than any dramatic writing had demanded since the time of Shakespeare.

Nora actually made the first great success of one actress

after another in various parts of the world, first of Johanne Juell in Norway, and even far into the twentieth century of actresses as far away as in Japan (Misses Mori and Mizutani). These rôles became so rich that they could and must change with the spiritual growth and life experiences of the actors themselves. When Betty Hennings took up *Nora* anew, twelve years after her last previous acting of the rôle, she made *Nora* completely over, simply because she could now penetrate so much deeper into this woman's soul, which was at once so childishly ignorant of life and so courageous in the face of the unknown—weak and strong, rich and destitute. Similarly, the *Nora* created by Johanne Dybwad changed, once, in 1890, at the Christiania Theater, when the actress herself was very young, it was a *Nora* who was almost a mere child, the happy "lark" who could hardly grasp with her own mind the new things that revealed themselves to her, sixteen years later, at the National Theater, it was a woman who hid in herself the secret dread of life's riddles, and who suddenly looked into terrors which forced her thoughts out upon new ways, the new truths awakened and rose out of her soul almost as if self-directed, without her volition.

In truth, it seemed as if the play itself went through a change during these years. Ibsen said more than once that he had harbored no intention of writing a feminist play—that he had wished to portray humanity. It was evidently true that the desire to fight was still alive in him. Even in 1882 he stated his program in the well known sentence: "In our times every literary work has the mission of extending boundary lines." But he always refused to let himself be appropriated by the "woman's rights women." Twenty years later he said in the *Norwegian Woman's*

Rights Society, that he did not really know what the woman's rights movement was—it was humanity that he had wished to raise to liberty

Both actors and spectators learned in time to see more and more in the persons, less and less in the tendency of the play. At first it was customary in many theaters that Nora gave her speeches in the last act as parts of an argument, the great actresses interpreted them as a settlement with herself. Spectators and readers followed suit. Sometimes there was disagreement between spectator and actor. I remember an occasion when I saw the Russian actress Alla Nazimova play Nora in New York (in 1908). It was superb acting, and the great change in the last act came quite from within. It was an inner fire which found expression in quiet, deeply impressive form. But the spectators applauded every speech as if it came from a popular orator—so new, so revolutionary did the thoughts still seem there. Gradually, however, it must everywhere come to pass that controversy disappeared, and only the great drama remained, this was the very greatest victory the playwright could win.

Chapter Ten

GHOSTS OF THE PAST

AS *A Doll's House* grew naturally out of *Pillars of Society*, so *Ghosts* proceeded even more naturally from *A Doll's House*. There were thoughts and questions, life destinies and psychological traits, which continued to live and grow in the author's mind, and which led to the writing of a new drama. No outer impetus was necessary this time, the new drama came to life in the author more quickly than almost anything he had previously written. And yet—or perhaps for that very reason—it became more revolutionary than anything else. In quietude of thought, shut off by himself, he gathered courage for a forward thrust, bolder and more inciting than he himself knew.

In *Pillars of Society* he had finally left out almost everything that led directly into the issues of feminism. They had first been included, because these questions had just then been awakened in him. They could be left out, because they were perhaps already forming themselves into a new dramatic subject in his mind. Similarly, in *A Doll's House* he had originally included so much philosophizing about family heritage and racial responsibility that the entire play was colored by it. But here, too, he left out most of that which gave definite expression to the new ideas, and in this case we dare say still more confidently that he already glimpsed the seed of a new drama. We know, at least, that he was in full progress, forming the new subject matter

in his thoughts, only a few months after the preceding work was out of his hands

A Doll's House had been published at Christmas time, 1879. In the fall of that year Ibsen had returned to Munich, after an absence of more than a year, and there he remained through the winter. It proved, however, to be his last winter there for a long time.

First he spent the summer of 1880 in the Alps, where he dressed as a genuine German tourist, with a Tyrolese hat on his head. He settled in Berchtesgaden for his third summer, having been there before in 1868 and 1872. Life was quiet and secluded in the little mountain village, and Ibsen lived quietly and peacefully. He no longer made journeys up the mountain tops, but was satisfied to saunter along the roads in the valley. Every Saturday night he was with Jonas Lie and his wife, and he had the young Norwegian novelist, John Paulsen, as a regular companion. Tru Ibsen and their son were traveling in Norway. There was much rain and fog that summer, even more than was usual in Berchtesgaden, and the rainy weather harmonized with what was working in Ibsen's mind. When John Paulsen once asked him what he was busy with, he said "It is a family history—gray and gloomy as this rainy day." The action of *Ghosts* took place on a rainy day, and Ibsen's thought involuntarily assigned it to the most rainy location he knew in Norway, the country about Bergen.

As yet he did no writing on the play in Berchtesgaden, he only thought and pondered upon the subject. In the fall there was an interruption in his work, for, when he returned to Munich, he received a note from the Norwegian Church De-

partment, saying that his son could not graduate in law in Norway without first taking examinations for the second degree Ibsen was thoroughly angry at this "genuine Norwegian" contrariness, and he vowed "For the black theological band which at present dominates the Norwegian Church Department, I shall, when the opportunity comes, raise a fitting literary memorial" His anger on this occasion probably helped to give life to the clergyman Mandeis, whom he immediately afterwards drew with such profound glee in *Ghosts* But the first effect was that he moved away from Munich, for his son preferred to continue his studies in Italy, and, consequently, Ibsen also went there Somewhat late in the fall he settled permanently in Rome, where he secured a house in Via Capo le Case, the same street in which he had formerly lived, only somewhat higher up towards Villa Borghese¹ During the winter he began making small notations for the new play, and he wrote it during the summer and fall of 1881, while he was living in Sorrento There he kept himself even more isolated than he had done in Berchtesgaden He lived in the same hotel as Ernest Renan, but did not make himself known to him He lived only with his play

The question which tormented Ibsen was whether it might not be possible to get rid of all the ghosts from the past which still rode people like nightmares He went about with the feeling that "all humanity had failed," was "gone astray" He felt a desire to raise a revolt against fate, to guide development into new channels But it seemed so hopeless, for the past was

¹ The upper part of the street is now called Via Crispi On the house in which Ibsen lived from 1880 on there was placed in 1910 a memorial tablet with an inscription giving the erroneous information that there he had written *Brand* and thought out *Pear Gynt* ¹

so strong—it was that which dominated human life. He therefore went about pondering the relation between past and future, between the race and the community on the one hand and the individual on the other.

Already in *Brand* he had pondered this question

Where, O where, does guilt begin

In our heritage of sin?

It had taken a religious-ethical form for him: the new generations must pay for the misdeeds of the old. He had vividly alive within himself the word from the Old Testament about Jehovah, the stern God who did not permit that the guilty remain unpunished, but who visited the sins of the fathers upon the children and children's children, and still further. He had raised up the one strong man, Brand, who was to take upon himself both the responsibility and the penance, and save the people from the heritage of sin, and he had satirized the weak, cowardly Peer Gynt, who felt that this sharing of responsibility was altogether too "uncomfortable." Yet Ibsen himself admitted that he did not like it either. "If one had," he wrote to Georg Brandes in 1871, "courage to leave it wholly and completely out of consideration, one might perhaps get rid of the ballast which weighs most heavily on the personality."

Just now, however, the thought of shared responsibility was borne ever more strongly in upon him. The thing that had first made it personally important to him was the feeling of how deeply he was united with his own people in sin and in repentance. But more and more the thought expanded for him. In the *League of Youth* we see how the characters, one after the other—Stensgård, Fieldbo, Aslaksen, the old and the young Brats-

berg—are accounted for by means of family heritage and social background In *Emperor and Galilean* it became a general, philosophic question Was it possible for the individual man to tear himself loose from the continuity of life on earth?

Ibsen must hold fast to the desire and right to be himself, to “realize himself” fully That always seemed to him the greatest thing of all, as he repeated constantly At the same time, it became clearer and clearer to him that the individual man, as well as the community, carried a “corpse in the cargo,” and there was a question of the possibility of throwing it overboard There was both an ethical and a dramatic conflict in this question

Now in the seventies natural science came with its new doctrine of evolution, and gave a new foundation to the whole idea of heritage and responsibility Darwin had already explained it in 1859 in his chief work, *The Origin of Species*, but it did not ignite the minds of people at large before he applied it to humanity itself in *The Descent of Man*, in 1871 The Danish author, J P Jacobsen, translated both books into Danish in 1872 and 1875, and the discussion about them spread out into wide circles It was as though both Christianity and morals would be endangered if the new laws of heritage should prove to be true

It was impossible that all this should not take a deep hold on Ibsen’s mind It lent a keener edge to the ethical problem, and made the question of personal liberty more complicated In the draft for *A Doll’s House* we see clearly the place which the new theories took in his thought It is clearest in the case of Doctor Rank, patterned after a liberal and intelligent young doctor whom Ibsen had known in Bergen There is only a little, and

yet enough, left of the idea in the final form of the play. We see here how Rank must suffer for the wild oats of his father, and how he deduces a general moral law from his experience. "In one way or another, you can trace in every family some such inexorable retribution." In the older drafts the connection is still clearer. There the doctor delivers long lectures about the effect of environment and about the evolution of the race. "Take up the natural sciences, ladies, and you shall see how there is a law pervading everything." The law of which he speaks is the Darwin-Spencer law of "the survival of the fittest" and "natural selection."

Such thoughts are not included merely as subject matter for more or less intellectual conversation. They bear a relation to the fundamental idea of the play. One thing which drives Nora to the thought of leaving her home is Helmer's speaking to her about the heritage of lies which passes on from the mother to the children and contaminates the home. In one of the earlier drafts Mrs. Linde, too, forces this thought upon Nora. Even the dramatic antithesis which creates the tragic catastrophe comes from the fact that Nora has not fulfilled the Darwin-Spencer demand that she adapt herself to the environment in which she lives. Or, more accurately, she has adapted herself quite superficially, she has laughed and played as her father and husband wished, but she has not succeeded in making the right adjustment between the outer and the inner life, and therefore at last she has to break out of her doll's house and try in a new way to find her bearings in that society which she has not previously understood.

Thus the old question of the relationship between the indi-

vidual and society has been shifted to new ground Ibsen had to think it through again—as did Nora, and the outcome of Nora's attempt to solve the question is what Ibsen wanted to show in Mrs Alving in *Ghosts* For Mrs Alving is in reality nothing but a Nora who has tried life and her inherited teachings, and who has now taken a stand

At the time *Ghosts* was published, everyone's attention was fastened first and foremost upon Oswald and the story of his illness, and when the play reached the stage, it was for a long time played as if Oswald were the central figure in it Therefore Paul Heyse called it a piece of "hospital literature," and doctors began discussing whether the case was rightly or wrongly diagnosed It was as though the play stood or fell with this medical question

Oswald, as a matter of fact, was directly related to *A Doll's House* It is the story of Doctor Rank in a new version, the sinful life of the father which avenges itself upon the son This story has been given much more room here than it had in *A Doll's House* It has become a main part of the action Yet the mental breakdown of Oswald is not the tragedy of the play The ravages of the disease are only the poetic symbol of the sinful family heritage which saps vital power The real tragedy lies in Mrs Alving's struggle against the heritage from the past—spiritual as well as physical

Nora had seen this tragedy rise before her in the fearful question of how her life of lies might affect the children, and in one of the first drafts for *Ghosts* Ibsen asks what kind of children they can give the world, "these present day women, wronged as daughters, as sisters, as wives, not brought up according to their

gifts, kept away from their calling, robbed of their heritage, embittered in spirit " The thing now in question was Nora as a mother After the new play was finished, he said to the English critic, William Archer, that his purpose had been "to show in Mrs Alving how a badly trained, badly taught woman must be driven to extremes in the opposite direction, when she met with people of Pastor Manders's way of thinking "

Mrs Alving had struggled loose from the old beliefs It is specified in the very first notes upon which Ibsen built his play, that this is "a main point she has been credulous and romantic " But the struggle was not over, even if she thought she was through with it, for all of this old matter "is not completely erased by the more recently acquired point of view All is ghosts " And again it appeared to Ibsen as if he gathered all the struggle of life into this one play "The play becomes like a picture of life Faith undermined But it will not do to say so

All is ghosts " "The fundamental feeling shall be," he wrote at another time, "the vigorously blossoming intellectual life among us in literature, art, etc , and then, as a contrast, all humanity gone astray " That is, the contrast between the new thoughts in the age and a generation which is not able to live by them

Mrs Alving was to be put on trial She had committed a deadly sin in her youth, she had married for "external reasons " It had been in full accord with old Christian morality Ibsen's original thought was that she had taken the depraved Alving with the intention of "saving" him, but such action, thought Ibsen, "brings a nemesis upon the progeny " It was the same thought which he had used in *The Vikings*, when he let Hjordis

and Gunnar have a son of poor mettle because Hjórdís had not married for love. The same thing happened to Mrs. Alving. The child she had, Oswald, was branded with disease, not because the father was a beast, but because the mother had obeyed the immoral ethics of society. It was, from the first, this sin of the mother's which avenged itself. This is an especially remarkable bit of information, because it shows us clearly that the starting point for Ibsen was not at all the medical fact, but a purely ethical principle—as was always the case with him.

Therefore the consequences appeared to Mrs. Alving in two fateful questions. The first concerned Oswald's half-sister, the father's illegitimate child, and here, too, the problem had at its beginning a form different from that which it finally received. There was a question of marriage between Oswald and his half-sister, but at first it was not a matter of saving Oswald—it was the daughter whom the marriage was to save, not from physical, but from moral destruction. Thus it was for her own sin that Mrs. Alving was to atone, the sin of not letting Alving marry the one he loved.

The other question with which she was confronted was whether she should take the life of the son who was not fit for a life worthy of a human being, much less for bringing new lives into the world. Doctor Rank had said in the outline for *A Doll's House* that such creatures should preferably be killed, but he had added that "we have not progressed far enough in our development yet." The same was true of Mrs. Alving. She stood over her ruined son with a bottle of poison in her hand, but had she—in this case more than in the former—courage to break through the accepted moral precepts? Ibsen did not an

swer this question, he let the curtain fall, so that no one could see the outcome

Immediately after the play was published, William Archer asked him outright how he himself imagined the conclusion. Would Mrs Alving give her son poison, or not? Ibsen smiled and said thoughtfully "I don't know. Each one must find that out for himself. I should never dream of deciding so delicate a question. But what is your opinion?" Archer answered that if she did not "come to the rescue" it must be because there still dwelt in her a "ghost," a specter of former times—that is, if it were granted that the disease was absolutely incurable. Yes, said Ibsen, that was perhaps the solution—that the mother would always wait and put off "coming to the rescue" with the excuse that as long as there was life there was hope.

From the summer of 1880 we hear that Ibsen in a way made trial of the question, by constantly bringing about discussions regarding the story *Two Shots*, which the young Danish author, Holger Drachmann, had published two years earlier. In this story, the great question of conscience was precisely this: whether it had been right to kill—from love—one who was incurably ill. There stood a strong woman who dared to take the responsibility upon herself, but, to be sure, a woman who had grown up independently, outside the rules of society. Mrs Alving's courage had been broken by the morality which society had fostered in her, and she stood spiritless, hesitating in the decisive moment.

What Ibsen thought was this: from the heritage of the past one can never escape, with that one must always struggle, and against it one must always fight. That struggle he felt in his

own mind, and it was the eternal drama in human life. The thought of this had ached in him, tormented him, and egged him on from his youth, and had led to tragic catastrophes in drama after drama. It was the past that had avenged itself on Catiline, on Lady Inger, on Hjordis, on Sigurd. Now the question had confronted him anew, more burning than ever before, now it applied to every single living person. The past had become the dead weight which dragged people down, prevented them from attaining to freedom and happiness.

"What right have we human beings to happiness?" Ibsen lets Pastor Manders ask in *Ghosts*. Thus the stern man of duty, Ibsen, might himself have asked. But within himself he began to rise impatiently against the outward demand of duty, that which only old and condemned rules of morality laid upon man. He wanted to find the true morality within himself, in the duties to himself. In this way he wanted to attain a life which should become happiness for each individual man. And it is strange enough that, in setting up his aim in life, he came to array himself on the side of a philosopher whom he had formerly scorned and scoffed at—John Stuart Mill.

With his utilitarianism Mill had (in 1861) attempted to break down the pessimism which concluded that no man could win happiness—the pessimism which both Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann had proclaimed. Schopenhauer had relinquished all happiness other than self-renunciation, the immersion in Nirvana, and Hartmann placed the aim of life progress in a negative sense of happiness which was identical with personal surrender. Mill raised the desire for happiness in the human being to something positive, something which

gave every man a tangible gain in life, the greatest possible happiness for the greatest possible number

When Georg Brandes in 1872 had translated into Danish Mill's philosophical declaration of his program, entitled *Ethics Founded on the Principle of Utility or Happiness*, Ibsen actually scoffed at the fact that Brandes had wanted to go to the trouble of publishing "this product, which in Philistine self sufficiency seems reminiscent of Cicero or Seneca" From youth up, Ibsen had a special aversion to Cicero He was of the opinion that there could not "be any progress or any future in the direction of Stuart Mill" But less than ten years later he himself repeated thoughts from Mill It was in Mill's ethics that he found the troublesome question "But have you a right to be happy?" And like Mill he now answered "Yes, that is exactly what I have a right to be!" From *Ghosts* on it became a cry, more and more fervently resounding through all he wrote—that life and happiness are what man should demand, and get

Mill had written that the present wretched education and wretched social order were the only true hindrances for the attainment of such a life by almost everyone, and Ibsen agreed In the summer of 1879 he wrote in a letter to Björnson that the only question for which he thought it worth while to struggle in Norway was "the introduction of an up-to-date education," especially a religious education which should do away with all "medieval nonsense" and give Norway people who thought freely The fundamental demand here was exactly that which he at the same time expressed in *A Doll's House*, that all the old teaching must be thrown into the casting ladle But while

Mill translated his ideal of happiness into a social demand, into social politics, it was the freeing of the individual which to Ibsen was the main issue, indeed the only one

When the characters in his play speak of the joy of life and of happiness, they usually give little or no information about what they mean by these words. But if one seeks the antithesis to the demand for happiness, one nearly always meets it in the word duty. And thereby one finds the content of happiness which Ibsen longed for: release from all external constraint, the right to be one's self, to unfold all one's talents in full freedom. But the opposition to such a personal liberation comes from all the old powers of society which live about one—and within one. It is against the past that one must wage war. Ibsen feels it to be the prison in which man is confined, and in fierce anger he tears and tugs at the bars of the cage. But will he ever attain freedom?

THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

THE professor of Greek at the University of Oslo wrote in a review "Of all that we have read in modern dramatic literature, *Ghosts* is the play which comes closest to the ancient drama. The tragedy of antiquity is called the fate or family drama, the tragic fate being inherited in the family. Here, too, we have a family tragedy, but it is also a social drama—the ancient tragedy resurrected on modern soil."

The Greek nature of this drama lies not only in the mighty principle of responsibility or nemesis which runs through it, but perhaps just as much in the severe artistic form. Plot and characters are drawn in firm and clear strokes, everything in consequential and irrelevant is shorn away. Here, as in *A Doll's House*, the number of characters has been limited to five, and this time Ibsen has even managed to get along without so much as a servant girl or a messenger—we meet no one except those who have a place in the main action itself. In this way an atmosphere of austere grandeur is given to the whole drama.

This, however, was not the general feeling at the time of publication. On the contrary, it had an effect as if it were the climax of crass naturalism, and Ibsen was put in a class with Émile Zola. For ten years Zola had been publishing volume upon volume of his great novel series about the Rougon

Macquart family, and had drawn in crude colors all the revolting vice and immorality which thrived among the citizens—last of all and most crudely of all in *Nana* (1880), a picture of sheer sexual lust

Hardly anything could so irritate Ibsen as to be classed with an author of this kind. It is true, he himself aimed to be a realist, to depict life with absolute fidelity, without ulterior considerations, but he resembled Flaubert more than he did Zola. He was a romanticist who had become realist—a man who thought romantically, but wrote realistically. He did not wish—did not even wish to seem—merely to study society in all the forms and consequences of vice and lust. The thing which filled his mind was the individual man, and he measured the worth of a community according as it helped or hindered a man in being himself. He had an ideal standard which he placed upon the community, and it was from this measuring that his social criticism proceeded.

It is even uncertain if he had read anything of Zola. Half a year after *Ghosts* was published, a Swedish painter asked him what he thought of Zola, but he answered brusquely "I don't read books, I let my wife and Sigurd do that." Fru Ibsen was, in fact, a great novel reader, and the son, Sigurd, actually studied Zola. If Ibsen had read Zola it might have chanced that he had noticed in him, too, something of an idealistic aspiration. Now he was more eager to emphasize differences between them. When the same Swedish artist spoke to him in praise of Zola, and especially of *Nana*, Ibsen cut him short "Zola is a democrat, but I am an aristocrat." And on a later occasion he expressed what was even more plainly indicative of his own personal



WALTER HAMPTON IS DOCTOR STOCKMANN IN THE NEW
YORK PRODUCTION OF 'AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE'

ideal in his work "Zola goes down into the sewer to take a bath, I, in order to cleanse it"

His contemporaries looked more at the resemblance than at the difference, and shrank back from *Ghosts*. They thought it improper and horrible that Ibsen had brought the "unmentionable" disease itself out on the stage, and they were wrought up because he seemed to defend incest and a mother's murder of her son. When *Ghosts* came out at Christmas, 1881, it struck like a thunderbolt down into a conventionally proper society.

As soon as Ibsen had well started to write the play, in the spring of 1881, he wrote to his publisher quite calmly "I feel assured that the book will be received with interest by the public." When he had finished, he realized that there might be a struggle. "*Ghosts*," he then wrote, "will probably in some circles create alarm, but that cannot be helped. If it did not do so, there would have been no need of writing it."

He expected an outcry from those whom he called "the stagnationists," the conservative party, but that he did not fear so much. Even his earlier plays had made him more and more at odds with the conservatives, and he neither wished for nor counted on acclaim from that source. As early as in 1878 he had said to Gunnar Heiberg "You must have talent, since you have been abused by *Morgenbladet*." When *Ghosts* came, the anger of the conservatives rose mightily against the apostate author, the conservative papers crossed themselves in consternation at the "nihilistic" morality in his new play.

But the fanaticism became worse than Ibsen had expected. We seem to see a reminder of it in the lines which, five years later, he lets Rector Kroll speak in *Rosmersholm*, when Rosmer

wants to announce his departure from the old beliefs "You are a credulous creature, Rosmer You have no conception of the overwhelming storm that will burst upon you" One thing which certainly came quite unexpectedly upon Ibsen was the mortal fear which seized the greater number of the "free-thinking" liberal party Though they were radical in politics, they were still for the most part conservative in religious and ethical questions They had been none too pleased when Björnson had gone into battle against theology in 1879, and they were not especially edified by the Christmas story *Else* which Alexander Kielland had published two weeks before the appearance of *Ghosts* But this last work was the worst of all, for such things the liberals would take no responsibility

One of the most prominent liberal papers in the country, *Oplandenes Avis* in Hamar, wrote about the new Ibsen book "As a work of our famous countryman it must, of course, be reviewed, though a complete silence here would in our opinion be the best review" And the comment of the paper was as follows "It is, to put it briefly, the most unpleasant book we have read in a long time The whole is a motley collection of licentious scoundrels and mollicoddles, who live in the midst of putrid conditions and among decadent institutions" Such a picture, said the paper, did not, thank God, apply to Norwegian conditions, it was found necessary to defend Norway against the Norwegian born author—he had lived too long outside the country "The only thing," concluded the paper, "which in a way brings some consolation when one has read the book through, is that, at least in our humble opinion, it is not nearly so well written as the author's earlier works"

Such was the tone in the liberal press throughout the country. The leading organ of the Norwegian liberal party, *Dagbladet* in Oslo, had indeed already struck the note. Fru Margrete Vullum, daughter of the Danish liberal Orla Lehmann, and a woman with a big and courageous heart, went up to *Dagbladet* the day that *Ghosts* came out, and offered to review it.¹ She had written reviews there for the last two years, and took it for granted that she would handle the new book. But the editor, N. Grevstad, had already got wind of the nature of this book, and he did not rely on Fru Vullum in the matter. He therefore laid down the stipulation that she must have the review finished for the afternoon edition of the paper the same day, and since she would not promise that, she was not given the book. This incident brought to an end her writing for *Dagbladet* as long as Grevstad was editor of it. Instead, there was a review by one of the regular members of the editorial staff, which summarized its judgment in these words: "The general impression given by the book is decidedly unpleasant. When one has read it, one involuntarily prunes the good old literature, because one could at least read it without danger to one's nerves. It is as if Ibsen had taken pleasure in telling all the worst things he knew, and telling them in the most extreme terms he could find." The review spoke plainly of what it was that Ibsen had this time turned his radicalism against: "It is again marriage that is attacked, and never has there been a more vehement and more reckless onslaught upon this institution, which is the foundation of organized society."

Strangely enough, this is almost word for word the same thing

¹ She has herself told me about the incident.—H. K.

as the foremost liberal paper of twenty years earlier, *Aftenbladet*, had written about *Love's Comedy*. Now *Ghosts* had assumed the same position. And the man who now felt so alarmed by the new attack upon marriage was none other than Arne Garborg, the author who at the same time published his story, *A Freethinker*. Surely nothing can better give the measure of the moral revolt in *Ghosts*.

Yet there were people who saw the greatness of *Ghosts*, and who dared to admit it. Bjørnson appeared in *Dagbladet* with an attempt to defend the play against Garborg's moral apprehensions. The editors hastened to end the debate, but in Ibsen there arose a feeling of gratitude to Bjørnson. "He has indeed a great kingly mind, and I shall never forget what he has done." *Vordens Gang*, the other liberal paper in Oslo, at least refrained from condemnation, and called *Ghosts* "a penitential sermon in a powerful and graphic form." *Nyt Tidsskrift*, which J. E. Sars and Olaf Skavlan had just begun to edit, printed in its first issue the enthusiastic review by Professor P. O. Schjøtt, which closed with the words that "when the dust which a somewhat obtuse criticism has succeeded in whirling up shall have subsided—we hope before long—then Ibsen's latest drama, with its pure and bold contours, will stand, not only as his noblest deed, but as the mightiest work of art which he himself and indeed our whole dramatic literature has up to this time produced."

In Denmark the outcry on the conservative side was as loud as in Norway, but there was a stronger literary liberal group to take the defense. There it was the leading conservative paper which was called *Dagbladet*, and the radical one which was

called *Morgenbladet*. In the latter Georg Brandes wrote about *Ghosts* with strong words of praise for the courageous work. But the general opinion, there as in Norway, was that the book was ungodly, immoral, and subversive to society—a book which people should preferably not read. The same judgment was heard from Sweden.

After his experience with the earlier books by Ibsen, the publisher had this time at once printed 10,000 copies, and the booksellers round about in the Scandinavian countries had in advance ordered a large part of the edition. But this proved to be a miscalculation. Hegel, the publisher, had to take back many of the books which had been ordered and some of those which the booksellers had actually bought. He even found that this Christmas he sold fewer of other Ibsen books than he had been accustomed to do in preceding years. To such an extent had people taken fright.

The Christiania Theater cited this "unanimous ill will" and "abhorrence" as a reason for declining to use the play. It had not happened to any earlier play by Ibsen, except in the case of *Love's Comedy*, that the theater simply had not dared to play it. Again, therefore, *Ghosts* met the same fate as this work of Ibsen's youth, the work which had led up to the social criticism that was to become identified with his name. And no theater either in Denmark or in Sweden would accept the play, every where it was turned down. Yet the Norwegian *Dagbladet* was so bold as to protest against "the brutal suppression" which this meant. Popular opinion, however, agreed with the theater when it thus closed its doors to *Ghosts*.

It was just as bad, or even worse, in Germany. No one dared

so much as to translate the book into German, it was not before 1884 that an enthusiastic woman, Frau Maria von Borch, prepared a German edition, and it was still two years before the piece was played in Germany. Then it had to contend with police ordinances.

The first time, in fact, that it was presented on any stage was, strange to say, in America, where no Ibsen play had ever before been produced. A Dano-Norwegian theatrical company acted *Ghosts* in Chicago, Minneapolis, and other cities in the West, in 1882. In Scandinavia—and for the matter of that in Europe—it was the Swedish actor and theater director, August Lindberg, who was the first to produce it, that was in Helsingborg in 1883, and later he traveled with the play through all the chief cities in Scandinavia. At the same time there were two Danish theatrical companies which played it, one in Norwegian, and the other in Danish provincial towns. In the same year the drama was presented at the Dramatic Theater in Stockholm. Thus the ice was broken, but yet there was strife about the play.

It was not so long since Ibsen had seen victory smile on him from all sides, the world had seemed to open before him. Now all at once he was made to feel like an outcast. Less than a week after the book was published, there streamed in upon him letters and articles which bore witness of the controversy he had raised. He was not so frightened at first, he thought the storm would rapidly subside. But he soon realized that it went deeper—that he had called out strong social forces against him. He thought that in Denmark there must be ill will back of all the abuse he was subjected to, in Norway he judged it to proceed chiefly from “the weakening of the critical sense”

which often accompanied theology. But the thing which seriously confounded him, was the way in which the so-called liberals behaved.

"These leaders, who speak and write about liberty and free thinking, and who at the same time make themselves slaves to their subscribers' supposed opinions! I see more and more evidence that there is something demoralizing in concerning one's self with politics and in adhering to parties. Under no condition shall I ever be able to belong to a party which has the majority on its side. Björnson says 'The majority is always right.'² And as a practical politician one must perhaps say so. I, on the other hand, must of necessity say 'The minority is always right.' Of course I am not thinking of that minority of stagnationists who are outstripped by the large middle party, which among us is called the liberal, but I mean that minority which takes the lead where the majority has not yet arrived. I mean that the man is right, who is most closely in league with the future."

Thus he wrote to Georg Brandes on January 8, 1882, and the same note is heard in letter after letter from this period. His eyes were suddenly opened to how "utterly lonely" both he and Björnson really were in their native land. Liberty was not yet a genuine reality there. At the bottom of his heart he had thought this all along, but now he tore himself completely loose from all dreams about the possibility of its being otherwise. He wanted to stand alone. "I will," he wrote to Olaf Skavlan on January 24, "stand as a lonely franc tireur on the outpost, and skirmish by myself."

² One must remember that this was certainly written before Ibsen had seen that Björnson raised his voice against the liberal criticism. The first contribution by Björnson was in *Dagbladet* for December 22, 1881.

Out of these experiences and thoughts he wrote *An Enemy of the People*. He had himself become an enemy of the people.

Now it is important to note that he had had this subject for a drama in mind even before he wrote *Ghosts*. It began to engage his thoughts already during the controversy about *A Doll's House*, but at that time it had not strained so hard for expression, and therefore *Ghosts* had been able to push it aside. Now it pressed powerfully forward, and already in the middle of March, 1882, only three months after *Ghosts* had come out, he was actively at work upon his new play.

The thoughts which thus took form were not new to him. On the contrary, they had lived in him from the time of his youth. They had come to him from that Danish fighter, Søren Kierkegaard—he who had turned his weapons sharply against all intellectual troop drilling, and who had thrown out the apothegm "The mob is falsehood." The idea was a part of the individualism which arose in the nineteenth century. A man like Tocqueville invented the catchword "the tyranny of the majority," and Stuart Mill explained philosophically the personal demand for freedom against the majority. From the opposite side came Bismarck, with his wish for at least some people in the State who would not submit to the majority; it was in a speech in November, 1881, that he poured his venom upon "die Hölflinge der Majorität, die Registratoren der Majorität."

Ibsen had himself as early as in his *Andhrummer* days, in 1851, been in conflict with both the reactionary minority and the "liberal" majority. He had no reverence for inherited dogmas; he rejoiced in revolt, and in new ideas that sprang up. We hear the very ring of *An Enemy of the People* in the speech

which Theodor Abildgaard, one of the first friends Ibsen won in Oslo, made at the labor meeting in 1850. He spoke of how the King with his veto could delay a law through three sessions of the Storting, and then he asked "But who can guarantee that a law which is made after the passage of so many years any longer answers to the need of the times?" He would not grant the old truths even so long a life as twenty years.

In *Brand* the cry had been "'Tis horrible to stand alone" and, "He hopeless fights who fights alone." But the meaning at bottom was that it was not honest or worthy of a human being to do anything else than to stand alone, to be one's self—for one's self. Both the Mayor and the Dean in the play are roundly satirized for their worship of the majority, and Peer Gynt, the antithesis to Brand, always goes with the majority, that is a foregone conclusion. When Ibsen fled from Norway, it was in alarm at all that could bind a man in his association with other people, even if they were friends and kindred spirits, in 1872 he wrote and warned Georg Brandes against building any hopes for his campaign upon an association. "To me, at any rate, it appears that the lonely man is the strongest."

He developed hatred and contempt, especially for politics and political parties, most of all for everything called democracy. We know this mood well from *The League of Youth*, and through the seventies he constantly aired it in paradoxes and epigrams which became almost regular pet phrases in his conversations and letters. Especially in the letters to Georg Brandes in the early part of the seventies, while he was working to formulate his view of life, we find much of this—words and thoughts which later returned in *An Enemy of the People*. The

continuity of his mental life was shown when, in 1875, in the foreword to the new edition of *Catiline*, he mentioned with scorn "Cicero, the assiduous advocate of the majority" We know that the same thoughts were particularly alive in him just before he wrote *Ghosts* in the winter of 1880-81

On New Year's Eve, 1880, Ibsen had a conversation with Kristofer Janson about French politics, in which he found fault with the French for driving the monks out of their monasteries "Is not that what I have always said, that you republicans are the most tyrannical of all? You do not respect individual freedom A republic is that form of government in which individual freedom is given least opportunity" He only became more angry when Janson defended the campaign against the monks by saying that the majority of the people were on that side "The majority?" said Ibsen "What is the majority? The ignorant mass Intelligence is always ~~in~~ the minority How many of those who are in the majority do you think are entitled to have any opinion? Most of them are blockheads" The thought was personal enough, though it was almost like a quotation from Schiller, in the lines spoken by the only man who voiced opposition to the majority in the Polish Reichstag

*Was ist die Mehrheit? Mehrheit ist der Unsinn,
Verstand ist stets bei Wenigen nur gewesen*

Ibsen thought likewise of his own people One time he said in all seriousness to Janson "Norway has at least been given one good law since 1814, and that is the law to protect quack doctors For now one can at least cherish the hope that a few more thousand idiots may be killed each year than would otherwise be the case" Another time he said "Would that there might

soon be a revolution at home! For then it should be one of my greatest delights to station myself on the barricade and shoot down Norwegian 'peasant aristocrats' " He complained that there was no one at home who dared to think or put into action a great thought—there was nothing but petty trifles "The only ones," he said, "who really have my sympathy, are the nihilists and socialists They want something definite and are consistent " Immediately after the controversy over *Ghosts* he wrote in a letter "Then, as at other times, the Norwegians proved to be the most cowardly of all, and the most cowardly among the cowards were, of course, the so called liberals " In another letter he said about them "They are poor stuff to man barricades with "

He himself wanted to stand on the barricade—in battle After he had moved to Rome in 1880, he was assiduous in his attendance at the Scandinavian Club, and always he had some thing to complain of and blame the management for, even if his complaints were mere trifles, he always turned them into matters of "principle" and made an issue of them There were some who wanted to make him president, but he was unwilling, and begged to be excused Finally he said "I tell you that I have to belong to the opposition "

It was indeed his own life and blood he infused into that Enemy of the People whom he created—the man whom life taught that "the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone"—the obstinate fighter, Doctor Stockmann

With all the bold aggressiveness of Ibsen's preceding plays, there was nevertheless something cool, something firmly restrained about the revolt in them The dramatist had fathomed

deeply enough the inner life which he described, but there was no rushing storm about the characters. Everything was subjected to the rules of a formal art.

This time the author gave free rein to his love of mockery, and created a comedy which truly gushed with life—in which the characters, and particularly the hero, were permitted to develop and play freely according to their own impulses, not always guided by the reins of dramatic laws. This was because Ibsen was here writing directly from life.

The name of the main character was taken from the house in Skien in which he himself was born. The name Stockmann took on a symbolic sound to him, he recognized himself in it, and he felt that he was on home ground again. "The badger" Morten Kull likewise got his name from Skien. During the winter of 1880-81 Ibsen had amused himself with writing down some memories from his childhood in Skien, it was intended as an introduction to a complete autobiography, and Ibsen looked back upon himself with a little smile. The autobiography was never finished, but there was something of a portrait in *An Enemy of the People*. When he had completed the play, in September, 1882, he wrote to his publisher "Doctor Stockmann and I get on splendidly together, we agree so well in many respects, but the Doctor has a more muddled head than I, and he has besides various other characteristics which make it possible that one may tolerate things from his mouth which might perhaps not be so well received if they had been spoken by me."

"Stockmann," he said many years later to a German friend, after having seen the play presented in Berlin, "ist zum Teil ein grotesker Bursche und ein Strudelkopf." To be sure, Doctor

Stockmann had received much of Ibsen's own spirit, but for all that he became a living, independent personality, made up of traits and characteristics that were derived from many different sources

In Munich Ibsen had known a young German poet, Alfred Meissner, who had often told of something that had happened to his father. The father was a doctor in the well known bathing resort of Teplitz in Bohemia in the 1830s, and when the cholera broke out there, he found it his duty to make this known to the public. By so doing he frightened all the guests away for that year, and the citizens of the town were enraged against him. They stoned his house, and he was forced to move away hurriedly. It is possible that this story may have given Ibsen the subject for the incident in *An Enemy of the People*. But the character of Stockmann he found much nearer home—in Norway.

In February, 1881, Harald Thaulow, an apothecary, had a terrific quarrel with the management of the Christiania Steam Kitchen. It was the last act of a struggle in which he had been engaged since 1872. In this struggle one of the incidents which made most noise was a meeting in October, 1874, three weeks after Ibsen had been back in Norway for his last visit. It was at this meeting that Thaulow read the protest which came to be known as his "truth telling speech." He tried to assert against the management a whole series of unpleasant "truths", and, as he said, he "must be unfaithful to his own nature if he did not, as he had done before, continue to speak the truth for its own sake."

This all sounded Ibsenesque enough, and in 1880 he sent out

a pamphlet attacking the Steam Kitchen management under the Ibsenesque title "The Pillars of Society in Prose" At the February meeting in 1881 he read a supplement to this in which he attempted to prove that the Christiania Steam Kitchen was the greatest humbug in the city There was a wild uproar at this meeting, and Thaulow could finally not be heard at all "No one can stand against the mob," he cried, and he left the meeting with these words "I will now have nothing more to do with you I will not strew pearls in the sand It is an infernal misuse of a free people in a free community Now I will go Kindly go to the dunce's corner and be ashamed of yourselves, all of you!" He went, and a fortnight later he suddenly died

The account of this disturbed meeting, which was given yet stronger relief by the death of the main actor so soon after, may well have inspired Ibsen and helped him put life and color into the meeting where his own Doctor Stockmann tried to tell the truth to his people And he may well have taken some traits from the apothecary Thaulow himself for his doctor Thaulow was a bold and self reliant man, and was besides a man of many impulses which often crossed each other in a somewhat unexpected manner In 1881 Jonas Lie wrote about Henrik Wergeland, who was a cousin of Thaulow "I have always seen the apothecary in him when he suffers from so many vagaries in his poetry"

But Ibsen himself has said that he had especially two men in mind when he created Stockmann They were Jonas Lie and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson

The author Jonas Lie was one of his friends from the old days It was Lie who had published *Love's Comedy* for him

in 1862. Now they had lived as neighbors in Berchtesgaden in the summer of 1880, it was Ibsen who had directed Lie to this location, and there Ibsen had thoroughly enjoyed studying his friend. Many an evening he stood out on the road and peered into Lie's living room. Jonas Lie was a great and remarkable person, with a big heart and an open mind, as he had proved to Ibsen just now in the *Ghosts* controversy. But when he wrote, and even more when he spoke, it was sometimes difficult to follow his thoughts. Flash upon flash of lightning shot through his mind, and every single flash was clear and powerful in itself, but the inner current which drew the line between them, often lay hidden deep underneath. Much of the abruptness in Doctor Stockmann, as well as the goodness and joyousness, came from Jonas Lie.

But Björnson gave to Stockmann his indomitable strength and will. He came vividly into Ibsen's thoughts just now in the controversy over *Ghosts*—"freely, resolutely, and boldly," as he appeared in the case. It was this controversy which finally brought them together again in renewed friendship. Ibsen had thought much about Björnson in the winter of 1880-81, while Björnson was in America, and it must be remembered that it was precisely at this time that the subject for *An Enemy of the People* began to grow in his consciousness. Ibsen thought it a deed of great daring to set out on so long a journey, and every time he heard of storm or sickness, he became anxious. "Then it broke in upon my consciousness, how infinitely much you are to me, and to all of us," he wrote to Björnson on March 8, 1882, a week before the first letter in which he mentions that he is working on *An Enemy of the People*. "I felt that if anything

should happen to you, if so great a disaster should strike our lands, then all joy of work would have departed from me" Some months later, when Björnson celebrated the twenty fifth anniversary of his authorship, Ibsen wrote to him the highest praise he could give anyone "His life was his best poem" He thought that Björnson had achieved the greatest thing a man can attain—"in his life to realize himself"

That which now impressed him with especial vividness, was how Björnson had never been afraid to risk his hide He recalled the flag controversy in the spring of 1879—the stormy meeting over which Björnson had on that occasion presided in Oslo, with the entire city mob against him—a meeting which had led to the rabble's stoning the house of one of his brothers-in-arms Ibsen had not the slightest sympathy with the movement for a pure flag⁸—quite the contrary, and for that very reason Björnson would not call on ~~him~~ when passing through Munich the next fall But Ibsen had been especially stirred by the persecution which Björnson was subjected to during the flag campaign We learn that he inquired diligently for news about it "It interests me," he said, "for it is outrageous" Then in the spring of 1881 came the boycott against Björnson by the Christiania élite when he was to speak for the Wergeland statue There was indeed material enough here for an enemy of the people The keen, reckless love of battle shown by Björnson through all of this was something which awakened both wonder and respect in Ibsen, and almost involuntarily Björnson must

⁸ The 'pure' Norwegian flag was one from which the Union Jack in the corner, symbolizing the union with Sweden, had been eliminated

leave his mark on the fighter who took form in Ibsen's imagination

Some of the joy of battle went into himself. He was so strong and self-assured now that, when the first anger subsided in him after the *Ghosts* disturbance, he could and must laugh. He wanted to ply the whip on people whom he held in contempt as a crowd of miserable slavish souls, and therefore his new controversial play became a merry comedy.

He himself suggested the connection between this and the earlier comedy, *The League of Youth*, by letting the printer Aslaksen appear anew, no longer now as the somewhat down-at-heels and unsettled fellow, but as a house owner and respectable citizen. The old opposition had now become defenders of the old order, Lawyer Stensgård had become governor. How could one expect a true spirit of liberty among such people?

Ibsen took vast pleasure in writing the new play. And he did it rapidly, too, within nine months after *Ghosts* had come out, it was completed. He was soothed into good humor by the work, and again—as in the case of *The League of Youth*—he said that it was to be a "peaceable play," one "that may be read by cabinet ministers and big business men and by their ladies, and that the theaters need not be afraid of."

The new comedy had indeed much more of common humanity in its nature than *The League of Youth*, and it became a theater piece which could make a success anywhere in the world. In plot, in character-drawing, in language, it was fresher and more flexible than anything Ibsen had written before.

He could not escape the fact that people took sides for and

against the opinions which were expressed in the play. Conservatives rejoiced over the ridicule of the democratic majority politics, anarchists welcomed it as a contribution to their social philosophy. But the thing that gave the play vital power was not its opinions, it was the sap of life that rose lustily in it, the delightful boldly-carved persons that moved in it—all fostered and born of genuine poetic wrath.

Chapter Twelve

PITY AND CONTEMPT

DESPITE the laughter that rippled through *An Enemy of the People*, there was a bitter undertone in the piece. Contempt can never give complete joy and freedom, and it was apparent enough that Ibsen felt contempt for that mob—cultured or uncultured, liberal or conservative—which his *Enemy of the People* had to shake off.

The feelings which here found expression were not new to him. He had often been compelled to swallow them in silence, but they had lived in him. Contempt had often been his mental weapon of defense. When he had felt the need to save his faith in himself through defeat and trying times.

It gave a certain liberation to the soul to be able to release his contempt in laughter. At the same time new questions in voluntarily awoke. Could those whom he held in contempt be any different from what they were? Presumably they, too, had their right to live and their possible explanation, what right had he then to despise them? Such questions began to arise in the creator of the *Enemy of the People*, and they started a ferment in his soul. He began to go about arguing with himself about his whole view of humanity and human life.

It was a new and serious readjustment that he was driven into, a readjustment in which the first and foremost question was that of the spiritual basis for the conduct of life and for the

ethical laws For a time it seemed to him like walking on a quaking bog, he could find no firm ground under his feet, he became uncertain of his own opinions and perplexed about all human existence

We do not know much that is fully certain and tangible about his inner life during these years, we are compelled to guess and feel our way, with only a few facts to lay hold on Ibsen at this time never expressed himself in verse, and his letters became more and more reticent as time went on Deliberately he closed the access to himself, so that no one could strike at his soul The reminiscences of his life which he had worked at occasionally in the years 1880 and 1881 he soon laid on the shelf Especially after the *Ghosts* controversy he became an adept at building defenses around himself, so that the opinions which the characters in his plays expressed should not be regarded as his own He would not be responsible for them More and more he made himself the great Silent One

"More and more," he wrote in 1886, "I tend to busy myself with a single thing at a time, to circle about a single group of ideas and, while this is going on, push everything else aside" Ever since he moved away from his native land in 1864, he had cultivated what he once called "a true, unadulterated egoism," that is, a working egoism which caused him to thrust aside all consideration of anything else than doing his work as perfectly as possible, and little by little he acquired regular habits of work When he was in Rome in the sixties, he often met with friends in wine shops and inns, and took a lively part in chat and argument When he lived there again in the eighties, he still went regularly to cafés, but he sat by himself Every

afternoon he came and took his regular place in the Caffè Nazionale, and sat looking at the people and the traffic on the Corso, but he seldom liked to have anyone speak to him. When he took his regular walks in town, he preferred not to see people, he was glad when his friends did not greet him. He often invited guests to his home of an evening, and he was a gracious host, but he did not discuss his personal affairs.

He had his home in Rome for five winters, from the fall of 1880 to the spring of 1885, and in all that time he lived in the same house in the Via Capo le Case. The first summer, 1881, he spent in Sorrento, but the next three summers he moved up to Tyrol, and now every year to the little village of Gossensass (in the Brenner region) in which he had spent a couple of summers before. He always felt more at home among German speaking people than among Italians, and he was especially delighted with the friendly Tyrolese. Gossensass became his favorite resort in Tyrol. It was a beautiful and sheltered place up among the high mountains, closed to the north, open to the south. There he found—as he wrote in a letter of 1889—“grandeur in nature and superb air.” There were fine paths everywhere, in the pine woods, along the Eisach River and the Pflersch brook. He seemed almost to be in Norway again when he stood gazing down into the rushing, swirling waters of the brook, and there he stood so often that the village people called him “das Bachmandl,” the little man of the brook. At other times he went up to a hill above the village, there he sat with the bog and wilderness behind him, looking down into the sun bright valley. On this hill the village in 1889 dedicated an “Ibsenplatz.” He was himself present on that occasion—it was

the last summer he was there—and in appreciation he gave the town a friendly memorial in his next book, *Hedda Gabler*

Ibsen once said that he thought with such gratefulness of Gossensass because he had found so many good friends there, people to whom he felt himself spiritually related. Yet he had no great circle of acquaintances there, all day he was usually by himself, but in the evening he might take part in the social life and gather a small flock of friends about him. Besides, he said, it was in Gossensass that he had laid the first plans for many of his plays. This statement might apply to *A Doll's House*, and later to *The Wild Duck* and *Hedda Gabler*, and some plays he had succeeded in completing there, namely, *An Enemy of the People* and *The Wild Duck*.

Especially associated with Gossensass is *The Wild Duck*, the play which resulted from the spiritual readjustment upon which Ibsen had now entered.

In February, 1883, barely three months after *An Enemy of the People* came out, he mentioned in a letter to his publisher that his thoughts were occupied with a new work. But it had evidently not reached the creative stage yet, for in the same letter he offered to prepare his early play, *The Feast at Solhoug*, for a new edition.

He had at one time been unwilling to acknowledge this play. It did not conform to the demands he had later learned to place upon his work, and he had not been eager to accept an offer from Hegel to publish it again with his other early works. But now the young Finnish literary critic, Valfrid Vassenius, had assigned to the drama a definite place in Ibsen's development. This was in a treatise on Ibsen's early writings—a treatise by

which Vasenius won his doctor's degree in 1879. It was the first learned work on Ibsen to see the light of day. Afterwards the same scholar had given what Ibsen himself called "a correct and exhaustive exposition of the play" in the book on Ibsen which he published in 1882. In this he had been able to build on information which Ibsen gave him in Munich in the spring of 1880. At the same time, however, Georg Brandes, in his long essay on Ibsen in 1882, had repeated the old assertion that *The Feast at Solhoug* was modeled on, or at least influenced by, *Svend Dyrings Hus*. This irritated Ibsen, and therefore he devoted the spring of 1883 to revising his old ballad drama.

The actual corrections that he made were not many—they consisted chiefly in changing minor matters of wording, but he wrote a long preface, in which he made a vigorous attempt to show that *The Feast at Solhoug* was a wholly independent work. What is characteristic and interesting in that preface is not only the strong self assertion, but even more the still lively indignation against a newspaper criticism of twenty-seven years ago, and the contempt which the author pours out upon the Norwegian reviewers of the fifties. We see here again some thing of the same feelings which had been uppermost in *An Enemy of the People*.

There is another thing which is remarkable, and which predicts a change. A large part of *The Feast at Solhoug* is in verse. But Ibsen had many years ago sworn never again to write verse, and immediately after his revision of this play, in May, 1883, he wrote the letter in which he so mercilessly condemned all dramatic writing in verse. Verse did only harm, he wrote, and would soon die out. We hear that even the following winter

he spoke in the same tone—that he “went for” the young Norwegian poet, Theodor Caspari. There is something of a contradiction here between word and action, and we may ask ourselves if he was, after all, so certain of the doctrine he proclaimed.

In the spring of 1884 we find that he had turned away from the theory altogether, indeed, that he thought of it as something of which he had rid himself long ago. “I remember well enough,” he wrote to Caspari, “that I once expressed myself somewhat disparagingly about the use of verse, but this proceeded merely from my own momentary relation to this artistic form. I have long since ceased to formulate universally binding precepts, because I no longer believe that one can with any inner right formulate them. I think that none of us can do anything more or better than to realize ourselves in spirit and truth. This is in my opinion the true freedom of mind, and therefore I am on many points heartily opposed to the so-called liberals.”

It is true that in the whole groundwork of Ibsen’s thought there lay the demand that each man should be—as he said in *Brand*—what by his own nature he was, be “whole souled in it, not only piecemeal and in bits.” But Ibsen had not therefore immediately attained to so broad a liberality that he did not place his own ethical measuring rod upon people. Indeed, one may perhaps ask: did he ever attain to it? The “integrity fever” which he was to scoff at so savagely in *The Wild Duck*—did he ever in truth become really free from it? Had he not in him too vigorous a capacity for anger to lay aside judgment and censure?

Nevertheless it is plain that a change had gone on in him, a change which became clear to himself in these years, 1883 and

1884, and we can perceive the connection between this change and the contempt for humanity which had found expression in *An Enemy of the People*. For the thing that was to become the subject of his next drama, the thing that he turned over and over in his mind during these same years, was this question: are not human beings at bottom too paltry to have any universally binding precepts set up for them?

As he thought back upon the demand for truth and freedom which he had raised in his writings for twenty years now, then he felt that he was disgusted both with himself and others. What in him had been insistence on inner restitution and liberation, he had seen interpreted as crude formulas with quite external meanings. People had contended about taking advantage of him for party needs and dogmas, while to him the only thing that mattered was the individual personal soul. Deep within him there grew a consuming desire to throw off this crudely thinking public. It irritated him and roused his scorn when he saw the heavy handed manner in which even Bjornson would solve a painful spiritual question in his play, *The Gauntlet* (September, 1883), he could not agree to setting up such rigid rules for a "true marriage." He felt himself much more closely related to the thought which sustained the powerful psychological drama that Björnson sent out soon after (November, 1883), the first part of *Beyond our Power*. The subject of this was how people strained themselves to the breaking point in trying to attain the great Christian ideals. In his notes for *Ghosts* he had himself formed the sentence "All humanity, and chiefly the Christians, suffer from megalomania." He thought their very ideals became lies in their lives.

Such a thought in reality bore within itself the bitterest contempt one can imagine. But with it came a godlike pity, a feeling which said not only miserable wretches! but at the same time poor folks! It was a feeling which must drive him to a deeper study of the soul, to a more eager attempt at understanding these wretched people.

Among the papers which Ibsen left was found a sheet of letter paper with a series of "Notes" of the same kind as one finds for several of his dramas. The writings here referred to, however, were not found with the plans for any drama, and they are not dated, so we cannot with certainty place them as to time. The only thing we know is that they must be later than 1882, for there is one sentence which clearly points to a decision of the Odelsthing from that year, the content of which is that the city councils should express themselves in the question of separate property rights for married women, and another sentence refers to a newspaper article by Georg Brandes from the fall of 1882 about Holger Drachmann's becoming a conservative. In publishing the fragment in 1909, I mentioned that the notations must date from the year 1883, and that they give us the first ideas for *The Wild Duck*. Now it is apparent enough that much in them points still further forward, especially to *Rosmersholm*, and I could perhaps agree to moving them somewhat forward in point of time, to the first part of 1884, but certainly not further,¹ for I think there can be no doubt that we here have notations for *The Wild Duck*. It is significant of the

¹ A German critic A. K. (Alfred Klaar?) wrote in *Vossische Zeitung* October 15 1909 that Ibsen had let him see these notations in December, 1882. The information here may not be altogether reliable, but it agrees essentially with the estimate of date which I have given.

period of intellectual adjustment which Ibsen was then going through, that these notes contain the germ of ideas which only in later years took shape

Of all the drama notations we have from Ibsen there is none which differs so much from the final form as these notes for *The Wild Duck*. The leap is so great that a whole intellectual development seems to lie between, and the leading thoughts in the notations therefore presumably go back at least to the summer of 1883, when Ibsen said in a letter to Georg Brandes "I am at this time revolving in my mind the plan for a new dramatic work in four acts. There is likely to collect within one, as days and years pass, divers kinds of whimsies, and for them one would fain have an outlet." His plans must already at this time have made considerable progress.

Now there is in these first notations almost nothing which we find again in *The Wild Duck*, except the main character—"the photographer, the abortive poet," "an idle dreamer"—and his marriage, which "in a way has become a 'true marriage' in that through his married life he has gone down, or at least not grown." Also we hear of his school fellow who comes to see the poor friend of his youth, but this school fellow is here a "sybarite who enjoys poverty and misery, æsthetically indignant." He is in a way the converted Ulric Brendel, Brendel, too, calls himself "a bit of a sybarite." What the shipwrecked photographer dreams about is revolution in social and intellectual life—he is a socialist, but he dares not act on his opinions. He is thus an unfinished Rosmer. How Ibsen had planned the drama with these characters, the notations do not tell us. The only thing that points to something like a catastrophe is this

remark about the photographer "Like the printer A (Aslaksen) he has caught a glimpse into a higher world, that is his misfortune" The conflict here, as Ibsen saw it, lay between a longing toward what was great and new, and a lack of the will to act. He wished to portray a sort of Peer Gynt type, a Peer Gynt placed in the midst of the conflicts of modern society

There are some things in these notations which point back to earlier conceptions. Some seem as if taken out of the draft for *A Doll's House*, as for instance "Modern society is not a human society, it is only a man's society" Others recall the preliminary draft for *Ghosts*, as when we read that the photographer "has come to the conclusion that improvement through liberation is impossible. The work of creation was a failure from the beginning" But this thought, which Ibsen went about pondering—whether humanity might have been a failure from its origin—was now given a new angle. In one of the notations for *Ghosts* the conclusion was "When man demands to live and develop humanly, it is megalomania" Now, three years later, Ibsen wrote "Liberation consists in securing for individuals the right to free themselves, each according to his need" It was the relative aspect of life, the right of each separate soul to live, which held him more and more strongly, so that he had to give up all universally binding precepts "Conscience," he states further in the last notations, "is not anything stable. It varies in the various individuals and in changing times" It was this idea which was to become a drama in *Rosmersholm*, the struggle between "the outworn and the coming conscience." He wanted to cast up accounts with all rigid

and preconceived rules of judgment upon different human individuals

Other things, too, drove Ibsen to test his old judgment anew. We hear that he had all the winter of 1883-84 "gone about pondering some new whimsies and playing with them so long that they finally took on dramatic form." But he has in addition told something of why the process of giving form to the new subject was so labored. "The political involutions in Norway have all winter hindered me from taking hold on my new drama with undivided peace of mind, but now," he wrote in April, 1884, "I have finally worked my way out of the rumpus."

These words are especially remarkable when one remembers how contemptuously he had always before spoken and written of Norwegian politics. I think, however, one can easily understand what it was that caused him suddenly to become so earnestly interested in these same politics. He had always thought that the Norwegian political leaders, from Johan Sverdrup down, were merely wordmongers who talked boldly and accomplished little. Now he saw all at once that the game was played in earnest. The campaign in the fall of 1882 mobilized social forces and wills in the country against one another for a decisive encounter, and words became deeds when the Odels thing in April, 1883, decided to impeach the Government. The impeachment case filled almost all of the next winter, ringing the changes on hope and apprehension, until the first judgment fell, late in February, 1884. The party of the Left succeeded in overthrowing by force the old rule of the party of the Right.

It was not strange if all this stirred Ibsen's mind to unrest

He had to admit to himself that he had mistaken the liberal leaders. They were not mere Stensgårds. It is perhaps even a sign of a new sympathy that, in January, 1883, he sent a letter of condolence to Sverdrup when Tru Sverdrup died. He wrote in the name of all the Norwegians in Rome "Be assured that all our thoughts are with you in your sorrow." But still more remarkable is the new political interest which we meet in him in the spring of 1884. When Björnson now wrote asking him to join in an application to the Storting for separate property rights for married women, he immediately agreed "with great pleasure," even though he did not believe that it would lead to anything. And he wrote (March 28) to Björnson a letter "after the manner of the Political Tinker." He wanted to unite "all the unprivileged" into a "strong, resolute, and aggressive party," and the program was to be "reforms." To be sure, he called them "practical and productive reforms," it was not to be common politics. Among the reforms he mentioned was "a very wide extension of the franchise" (that one must certainly call politics), "regulation of the position of women, freeing the public schools from all sorts of medievalisms, etc." Two weeks later he wrote a letter to the students' association Fram, with thanks for a birthday greeting, and there he said that he heartily wished progress for "every timely reform in the intellectual and the social field." Thus he was again a friend of reform, not such a reform hater as he had been twelve or thirteen years earlier. He emphasized that they must be social and intellectual reforms, and he had no faith that the old party of the Left would fight for such issues. Nevertheless we see a change in attitude.

He took up for reconsideration his entire relation to his native land. In his first notations for *The Wild Duck* he wrote "Patriotism and similar emotions are a transition stage," and in 1888 he wrote in a letter "For an intellectually somewhat developed person the old idea of patriotism will no longer do. I believe that national consciousness is about to die out, and that it will be replaced by race consciousness. At any rate I have, for my part, passed through this evolution." In action, however, he disproved these words. After the breach in 1864 he had sworn deeply and solemnly that his son should never become a Norwegian, and he had let the lad receive all his education abroad. In 1880 he had tried, nevertheless, to enroll his son in the Norwegian University, and it was only when this plan did not succeed that he determined to let him become an Italian citizen. Sigurd Ibsen did, in 1882, take the degree of a doctor of laws in Rome, and presented himself thereupon for the diplomatic examination which should admit him to the Italian foreign service. But when the decisive moment came—when he was to become naturalized—both he and his father drew back. I wonder if Fru Ibsen was not in a special degree responsible for the fact that a Norwegian feeling thus lived and was strengthened in the son. Time and again she had taken him with her to Norway for summer visits. "Here we stand"—wrote Henrik Ibsen in November, 1883—"at the point which it proves so hard for us to get past. To cut one's self off completely from one's fatherland—that is a serious matter." Then he turned to his old "Hollander" friend, O. A. Bachke, who was then Minister of Justice, and asked if it might not be possible to get his son into the Norwegian-Swedish foreign service so that he might remain

a Norwegian citizen The attempt was successful, the next year Sigurd Ibsen entered a Norwegian department, and later the foreign service For twenty years he was connected with Norwegian politics It may be that it was chiefly he himself who urged the point and wanted to get home Yet Henrik Ibsen, too, felt how he was bound to the homeland, and certainly he had a new understanding of his people as a result of what happened in the years 1883-84

When in June, 1884, he thanked Theodor Caspari for a poetic greeting which he had received after their association in Rome the winter before, he wrote of how this poem "impressed and moved" him each time he read it There was in reality nothing remarkable about the poem, but it closed with a warm appeal to turn homeward

*Come home to your fireside, your neighbors and friends,
Let the homeland bring warmth to your heart!*

And it was this note of home in the poem that took hold of Ibsen "There is to me something so homelike in it"

From the middle of April to the middle of June, in barely eight weeks, he had prepared the entire first draft of *The Wild Duck*, and it was perhaps a long time since his thoughts had traveled so constantly to his homeland When he had wished to depict a Peer Gynt temperament, a man who turned life and action into dreams and poetry, he had to seek material within his own breast This time he drew Hjalmar Ekdal from an artist he had known in Norway, the painter Magnus Bagge from whom he had taken lessons in the years about 1860 Bagge had a constant longing to lift himself up above everyday prose, it is characteristic of him that later, in Berlin, he called himself

von Bagge Yet Ibsen also added many traits which he had found in himself

Then he created the dramatic conflict and antithesis by setting up against the artist who lies himself away from life the stern adherent to truth with the "horrid" name, Gregers Werle—the schoolmate of the notes, made over from a sybarite to a dyed-in-the-wool ascetic This Gregers was a caricature of himself from the time he went about with "the claim of the ideal" in his pocket—the bird of ill omen who brings his demand for truth to people who are not able to fulfill it, but who preferably and most successfully live by their "life lies"—their illusions

It was his two natures which Ibsen thus set up in strife against each other, and the drama became the tragic defeat of the apostle of truth, not this time as in the case of Brand because love was not sufficient, but plainly because the demand was inhuman Ibsen had lost faith in that people could bear the full truth He grew angry with such miserable creatures, but he pitied them too, and he directed his wrath just as much against the man who was foolish enough to come blundering with his demand for truth

Ibsen's warmest sympathy, however, was with the innocent child who stood between the two men, and who had to suffer both for the lie and for the truth—the child who believed and who sacrificed, but to no avail Of this figure there was no trace in the first notations for the drama, but it gives new evidence of how the work brought his mind back to his home, for to this child he gave the name and the faith of his own sister, Hedvig, especially, perhaps, as he remembered her from the

time he was at home on his way from Grimstad to Christiania, when she was seventeen years old and went to meet life full of anticipation and great hopes. He wove her into his own childhood dreams, from the time he sat at Venstop and looked at the old picture books, such as the big *History of London* of 1775, with castles and churches and sailboats which bore his thoughts far out into the world—books which took on such a strange air of romance because they were left there by the previous owner of the place, one whom people called “the Flying Dutchman,” a Risør boy who had been a slave in the Barbary States and had been in prison in England, he had died just the year that Henrik Ibsen was born. All the mysticism of life Ibsen gathered in little Hedvig, but she and the mysticism were forced to give way before the hard facts of life.

Both she and all the ruined hopes with which the play deals found their symbol in the bird which Welhaven once had given life in Norwegian imagination by his imperishable little poem, “The Sea Bird,” the wild duck who dies from the shot of a careless hunter, and silently dives down to the bottom of the sea. It was thus a symbol that Ibsen borrowed from romanticism, and with it he wanted to kill the very romanticism of life. Or, more accurately, he wanted to show that people craved such romanticism while in reality it was only falsehood and self-deception. The romantic symbol helped to give the play the remarkable double groundwork which it received, so that it was bitter and mild at the same time. The symbols he had used in his recent criticisms of society—the corpse in the cargo, the rotten ship, the inherited disease—had received a more and more realistic stamp, so that they were hardly felt to be sym-

bold The broken winged wild duck which gathered about it the dreams in the Ekdal home sent a strange tremulous flute note into the harsh, cold realism which otherwise gave such a sinister air to the play

Perhaps there was a childhood memory underlying this, too. At least we know that the old Knud Ibsen was a great hunter, and the love of the hunt was inherited by his sons Johan and Nicolai. The guns of which there is so much talk in *The Wild Duck* were well known to Henrik Ibsen from childhood days, and old Ekdal in the play was given many traits from the author's father. As in *The League of Youth* Ibsen had used his father as a pattern for old Daniel Heire, the man who in his way was to be a counterpart to the self-deceiver, Lawyer Stensgird, so he places beside Hjalmar Ekdal the old fellow who, while shooting rabbits in the garret, relived his hunter's feats in the great forest. Again his father furnished the pattern.

It is most likely an accident that the story of the wild duck in the loft here in Ibsen's play is reminiscent of what Darwin tells about wild ducks—how they lose their distinguishing characteristics in captivity. Yet there is an inner connection, for both heritage and environment are given an important place in the tragedy of the wild duck. Gregers, Hjalmar, and Hedvig bear in different ways the marks of the past and of their upbringing. These things were still to Ibsen the main conditions of life—only he no longer rose to such wild struggle against them, but submitted to facts.

The happy faith he had proclaimed in *Pillars of Society* had not been able to stand its ground in life's hard test. The revolt in *A Doll's House* had still the hope of victory in it, but *Ghosts*

was a tragic defeat, and even the gay good humor in *An Enemy of the People* had its root only in the feeling of strength in standing alone, apart from the mass. In disappointment and hopelessness over humanity, *The Wild Duck* was then created.

When one sees or reads the play, one may often be tempted to ask with whom does the tragedy deal? According to the first notes by Ibsen there can be no doubt that Hjalmar Ekdal was originally meant to be the main character, and it is his hollow soul, in all its self love and falsehood, that the play aims to reveal. Yet one might also think that the play really wants to show us the tragedy of the proclaimer of truth, Gregers Werle. Or perhaps that of the other believer—Hedvig, the child. So strangely many sided and rich is this drama.

Even more than in *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* it was life itself that Ibsen intended to represent, and he showed it in many refractions at one and the same time. We have the hard handed judgment upon romanticism, and at the same time the gentle defense of it in Doctor Relling, he who creates the word "life lie." We have romanticism distorted and made mock of in the drunken theologian Molvik, who parades about with the favorite romantic appellation "dæmonic," the mark of the double personality. Ibsen has not only—like Shakespeare—dared to inject humorous words and incidents into the middle of the tragedy, but he has made the tragedy itself more moving, he has increased the horror of it, by means of the sharp contrast between everyday fun and deep misery.

He was able to portray life with such fervent power because this drama welled like a fiery stream up from his own soul. It was his own struggle and his own defeat that he held up be-

fore himself In the moment when he ridiculed the great demand for truth, he was truest to himself Never had he written anything more true to life than when he defended the life he

With full justice he could write when he sent *The Wild Duck* away "This new drama holds in certain respects a place by itself in my dramatic production The method of procedure is in various ways different from my earlier one " More important than "the method of procedure" was the spirit which lived in the play—the double vision which saw the right and the wrong side at one time, a spiritual insight which was at the same time merciless and loving The judge and chastiser had—so he himself tells us—become fond of the poor creatures he had in his hands, he knew them through and through, and he acquitted them for the very reason that they were so weak

so Bjornson wrote to Jonas Lie—"gave a higher percentage, after all" They felt that they stood together in their work, and the liberal paper *Verdens Gang* hailed their meeting as a sign that they intended to work together for intellectual progress Ibsen was no longer the poet of the conservatives

Bjornson actually made an attempt to bring Ibsen home, he wanted him to become director of the Christiania Theater, and Ibsen admitted that the thought cast "unrest and longing" into his mind He had not just at this time any new subject for drama in view, and he felt more strongly than otherwise "the lack of a steady and obligatory activity" Yet he dared not take the chance, at least he wanted to wait a year or so before making a decision He consoled himself with the thought that those who were in authority at the theater did not want him anyway

Fru Ibsen and their son were home in Norway this summer They traveled all the way up to North Cape, and they came back to Gossensass with a Norwegian atmosphere about them They could probably report with certainty that Sigurd Ibsen would be permitted to enter Norwegian government service This was a new bond between Ibsen and Norway But Fru Ibsen could also report that her husband was much more unpopular with the conservatives at home than she had dreamed He could no longer count on old friends

Then, when *The Wild Duck* came out in November, 1884, it was almost as if the ground under his feet had been taken away There had always been conflict about his plays, and opinions had clashed strongly, but this very fact gave evidence of how intimately he was bound up with life at home *The Wild Duck* roused more speculation than conflict, people stood

quite perplexed before this new play "It is a strange book," wrote *Fedrahøimen*, and this was certainly the general feeling "The public does not know what to make of it," corroborated *Christiana Intelligentsiedler*, "and the criticism which appears shall make it no wiser, for one paper says one thing and the other just the opposite" "One may study and study," wrote *Aftenposten*, "to find what Ibsen wants to say, and not find it" Margiete Vullum, one of the few who understood some of the deepest thoughts in the book, pointed out what it was that made it different "Here is an irony that plays against it self like diamond cutting diamond Here utterance stands against utterance, so that each time one thinks that one has 'the meaning of the play,' a new utterance comes and wipes out the impression"

Morgenbladet, which did not at all understand the book, explained the reason why people were thus at a loss—they were accustomed to, and they had expected, something different "In so far as one had expected that there must be some truth or other which the author wanted to convey to his contemporaries, or at least some problem or other that would be brought under debate, expectations will hardly be fulfilled" The paper therefore found the plot of the drama "as queer as it is thin One would have difficulty in assembling a series of stranger details," and the conclusion here was that "the total impression can hardly be other than a strong sense of emptiness and unpleasantness"

How the disappointment expressed itself on the liberal side was clearly evident in *Bergens Tidende* which, though it had

to admit that this was "a brilliant book," offered the following criticism "We can admire Ibsen All of us, without reference to party, admire Ibsen, we admire his handling of dialogue, his dramatic skill, his subtlety and accuracy in character drawing He is a great philosopher, but he does not speak from the depths of his heart as does Björnson He does not make demands of the individual with the same strength, he has no faith in his own ability to ennoble humanity by means of his writings He states the problems excellently, as he sees them, but he makes no attempt to show the way beyond them, he chastises as one who has authority, but makes no demand for improvement"

That is to say if Ibsen was not the poet of the conservatives, he could not properly be called the poet of the liberals, either There was perhaps no one but Irgens Hansen in *Dagbladet* who immediately had a full if somewhat vague recognition of the new element which made its appearance in *The Wild Duck*—a recognition that Ibsen here "stands on humanity's ground and speaks humanity's cause, even the cause of a very shabby humanity"

But if Ibsen thus for a time was compelled to feel somewhat homeless in Norway—and his drama did not find any greater understanding in the other Scandinavian countries—this feeling of strangeness was removed when *The Wild Duck*, after New Year, 1885, appeared on the stage Then it won great popularity, especially through Arnoldus Reimers's splendid acting of Hjalmar Ekdal at the Christiania Theater Ibsen began to forget the "cold uncomprehending eyes" which the year be

fore had frightened him when his thoughts went to Norway

He was now a man close to sixty years of age, and it is a well known fact that the older a man grows, the less he thrives in foreign lands and the more he longs for his homeland

Though Ibsen was generally in good health, he felt less well than usual at this time, and that, too, drew his longing homeward In the spring of 1885 we suddenly hear that he thought strongly of buying himself a small house on the fjord out side of Oslo, "where I could live entirely segregated and exclusively occupied with my work" It was more than an impulse Later in the spring he at least showed the seriousness of his intention by setting out northward from Rome, and when he passed through Copenhagen, he said that it was his intention to live for the rest of his life in Norway

It proved, indeed, to be his final departure from Rome It was twenty one years since he came there for the first time, and in this period he had lived in Italy for about ten years We can see no evidence that the intellectual life of contemporary Italy left any traces in him But he had found peace and joy in the country, and he had felt at home among the friendly people, he always looked back upon Italy with gratefulness

In the first days of June he was in Christiania There he happened to be present in the Storting (June 10) during the first great debate about the right of religious and moral free thinking—the debate in which the moderate and the radical Left for the first time stood in open conflict with each other—the debate on whether Alexander Kielland should receive an author's stipend Ibsen did not say much, but he was indignant at the defeat of intellectual freedom, and it offended him that the Sverdrup

Government stayed away while such a case was being debated. He thought it deplorable that the country's first Government of the party of the Left should yield to "the opinion among the victims of clerical stupidity." When on the following day he took the train northward to Trondheim, he said to Bjornson's son, Bjorn Bjornson: "Greet all the young people in Norway, and bid them be loyal, and tell them that I want to join them as flugle man on the left side—as left flugle man! What may look like madness in the young will nevertheless be victorious in the end—you may rely on that!" This agreed with what he had written the previous year to the student association, Fram: "Support from the young is dearer to me than support from anyone else. Moreover, I hope confidently that the years shall never bring me to the point where I should feel a stranger among the intellectual younger generation."

When he arrived in Trondheim, and the Labor Union honored him with a banner procession (June 14), he spoke of the disappointment he had suffered in his homeland: "I have found that the most indispensable individual rights are not yet so safe as I thought I might hope and expect under the new administration. A majority of those in power do not concede to the individual either freedom of belief or freedom of utterance outside of an arbitrarily fixed limit."

This freedom was of the greatest importance to him, and he adjured those who still had not attained power, the workmen and the women, to build a new community on a foundation of such true freedom. He thought they could bring into democracy the element of nobility which was necessary. "I am, of course, not thinking of the nobility of birth, nor the nobility

of wealth, nor that of knowledge, nor even that of talent or genius, but I am thinking of the nobility of character, of will and of mind That alone is what can liberate us ”

He wanted to call the liberated spirits to arms, and to enlist them for leadership in the community He promised that he would all his life work for that reconstruction of society which should bring the new groups into power

Ibsen remained in Trondheim almost an entire month, waiting, with his wife, until their son should be relieved from government service in Stockholm and come to stay with them for a while They had a quiet and peaceful time during these weeks, and were equally quiet and peaceful afterwards during the two months they spent at Molde Ibsen had longed so much to see the ocean, and here he could walk every day along the shore with high mountains directly opposite

Though life outwardly seemed to proceed in undisturbed peace, there sometimes occurred one thing and another which brought displeasure and irritation to his mind When the Labor Union in Trondheim invited the city to honor the great author, the liberal paper there remarked that “the aristocracy of the city had chosen to be conspicuous by its absence ” While Ibsen was at Molde, his old friend Professor Lorentz Dietrichson came to stay there for a time, and he seemed to notice that Dietrichson kept somewhat aloof from him Word was brought to him that Dietrichson did it out of consideration for the conservative people in the town Presumably the report was untrue, but one must remember that perhaps at no time in Norwegian politics had party hatred taken such crude forms as just then While the liberals strove to wrest the power into their

own hands throughout the country, the opposition had become so sharp and bitter that members of the party of the Right and that of the Left could hardly associate with each other. The impeachment of the conservative ministers had made the relation between them still worse, and after the Supreme Court judgment upon the Government, in 1884, there was a time when those who had lost could hardly bear to see the victors before their eyes. Just at this time Ibsen came to Norway, and while in Christiania on this particular visit he associated chiefly with members of the most radical Left. Both there and in Trondheim he took sides openly with radicalism, and therefore it was not surprising if he was made to feel the effects of party hatred. A few years later he said that during this summer in Norway he went about apprehensive lest people behind him in the street should poke him in the back with a stick, or spit on him.

While he was at Molde, a new drama subject began to shape itself in his thoughts, and when he was about to set out from there, he announced that "the matter which he found it a life necessity to present to the world would not win everyone's sympathy", he had a new agitation in view. He spoke of this when the singers of the town came to honor him on the day before his departure, September 4, and he requested only that "those social groups which must be offended would respect his ideas, even as he respected theirs." But he added that the stay at Molde, "with its great natural beauty and quiet, peaceful inhabitants," would perhaps, after all, "put something softening into what he felt himself driven to say"—it was not that he wanted strife.

The conflict seemed to subside when, after leaving Molde, Ibsen arrived in Bergen. It was twenty two years since he had seen that city in which he had experienced so much of the struggle of his youth. He could not help being a trifle embarrassed when he was greeted on the pier with a hearty "Hello, Henrik!" from old acquaintances who could hardly be classed with the best people in town. But the greeting was lost in hurrahs as he stepped ashore, and in the week or more that he spent in Bergen he had occasion to revive many pleasant memories, as for instance when his old sweetheart, Rikke Holst, now Fru Tresselt, came and spoke to him. The board of trustees of the theater, under whom he had once slaved, invited him to a celebration performance, and the play chosen for the occasion was his own *Lady Inger of Östråt*. Fru Laura Gundersen had come to the city to play the title rôle, he himself took part in the instruction, and the failure of thirty years ago was now turned into a great victory. The actors shouted a three fold hurrah and a "Long live Henrik Ibsen!" The Labor Union had wished to greet him with singing and a torchlight procession, but this he begged to be excused from—he did not want too much of an "ovation."

The last week in September he was again in Christiania, and here his visit to Norway was terminated in a harsh note of discord. Here both the Labor Union and the Students' Association wanted to have torchlight processions in his honor, but again he refused with thanks, and to his radical friends he remarked that he did not like the reactionary spirit which dominated the Students' Association. The offer of a torchlight procession he thought had been forced through by the radical mem

bers of the organization Dietrichson was president of the Association at the time, and Ibsen said right out that nothing could please him more than if the radicals, the party of the Left, could become strong enough to overthrow Dietrichson.

Two days later, September 30, he traveled by rail to Copenhagen, and there he attended the freshman party in the radical Students' Association which three years earlier had been organized in opposition to the non partisan or conservative Students' Society. There Georg Brandes, in a speech for him, stated that Ibsen did not feel himself related to the Norwegian students. "There are no students in Norway," he added, undoubtedly in harmony with what Ibsen thought. On the very same evening an announcement was made in the Norwegian Students' Association of what Ibsen had said before leaving Norway. There followed a great commotion. Dietrichson telegraphed an inquiry about the truth of the report, and Ibsen telegraphed back his reason for not accepting the torchlight procession. "I said among other things I do not wish for student merrymaking on the occasion of my departure. My heart felt meaning was that I do not feel myself allied to a Students' Association which is under your leadership." In the next meeting of the Association Dietrichson gave a long explanation of the entire matter, trying to show that "the great dramatist had on this occasion proved to be of small dimensions," and blaming Ibsen for "onesidedness and narrowness." He even put his speech of complaint into verse—a poem which he let the Association sing the same evening. Here he declared that Ibsen in this case "deserted his own teaching," because he demanded that the students take a stand other than their own, but for punishment

Dietrichson would "shake him off in a chorus of laughter" and explain how

*The Norwegian student feels anger and grief
For every star that is seen to fall*

The matter was taken up for debate in meeting after meeting. The majority in the Students' Association agreed with their president, and there were conservatives who even said that one must denounce Ibsen as one would the devil himself. But the radical students held a great meeting of protest, and declared that the young people followed Henrik Ibsen. There is clear enough proof of Ibsen's own anger and excitement in the fact that as late as in October he sat down to write a long and bitter statement to the Students' Association about all that he had said and thought. He wrote that "Lorentz Dietrichson's attack" would leave in his mind an unpleasant memory for the rest of his life.

Now, so long afterwards, the whole incident may appear small and amusing, and a few years later Ibsen himself preferred to hear no more of "the foolish affair." But at that time it occurred in the midst of great upheavals which stirred powerfully all intellectual and social life, and it brought conservative and liberal papers out into sharp controversy—everything at that time was brought into party politics. Camilla Collett, writing in *Nyt Tidsskrift*, gave the event a general significance. "It came as a sudden flurry of storm, shaking, rousing—deeper and carrying more consequence than we all thought. To me, I admit, it has brought joy. It has been genuinely refreshing to follow the entire procedure, confessions and explanations from 'the offended ones,' which in revelation of detail leave nothing

to be desued of what might compromise their own position At last! I said At last there is a real breach in the screen of phraseology with which everything has to be covered here in our city More and more now the screen will crack and show us the hollow foundation But it took an Ibsen to make the beginning ”

The general results of the clash were probably not so great But the breach in the student world widened, and the controversy led to the organization of the Liberal Students' Society in November, 1885, it immediately elected Ibsen and the other great authors—Björnson, Lie, Kielland, and Camilla Collett—as honorary members But directly following this came the “Boheme” controversy with its questions of sexual morality and the limits of decency in writing, and the Liberal Students' Society was broken up It was a radicalism more extreme than that of Ibsen which here appeared, but certainly Ibsen had helped to break the way for it

Ibsen had welcomed the liberal movement among the students When he sent the letter of appreciation for the protest meeting against Dietrichson's Students' Association, he wrote that this had strengthened the hope which he had never been able to relinquish—“The hope, that the great majority of the student youth in Norway, as well as in the rest of Europe, is after all in league with the struggling, clarifying, and ever forward moving life forces in the realm of science, art, and literature” Afterwards he gave hearty thanks for the honor which the Liberal Students' Society had shown him Never before had he so openly and so personally taken sides with the radicals as in this controversy

But in the "Boheme" affair there appeared much coarseness which repelled him. In the spring of 1886 the Liberal Students' Society asked Georg Brandes to come to Christiania to lecture, but when Brandes spoke on the suppression of liberty in Poland, some of the extremists attacked him because he had not chosen to speak of the suppression of freedom in Norway, where the police had just placed a ban on a book entitled *Fra Kristiania bohemen*. The students criticized Brandes as being both "lacking in character" and "mean." Brandes was of the opinion that there might be something of greater importance in the world than the controversy over this one book. Ibsen thought that the incident gave "a valuable contribution to the understanding of our progressive men." "Never"—he wrote to Brandes—"have I felt more a stranger to my Norwegian countrymen's *Thun und Treiben* than after the lessons which the last year has taught me. Never have I felt more repelled, never more unpleasantly affected. But still I do not give up the hope that all this crude temporariness may some time be clarified into a real cultural content in a real cultural form. But that possibility does not at the moment interest any one up here. Nor do I believe that the forces active among us at present could carry forward any deeper and more intensive issues than those which are now on the program. And perhaps they can barely enough carry those."

It irritated him to see that the first Norwegian Left Government under Johan Sverdrup turned its weapons against the freedom which had been one of the objects of the liberal struggle. But it irritated him still more to see the way in which liberal people attacked Sverdrup. He knew that being in the Gov

ernment must be different from standing in opposition, and he thought the attack on Sverdrup mean, ungrateful, and disrespectful. The intellectual and political life in Norway appeared to him quite crude and unfinished.

It was this impression which found words in the first poem that he had written in many years, the one which he called "Stars in a Nebulous Mist." He thought he had seen a chaos, an intellectual life "with scattered wills and parted ways," "without eager progress toward a central point." He still believed that out of the confusion, out of the nebulous mist, there would some time emerge a luminous star, a unified will. But as yet the new popular spirit was only in its first stage, and it had a long journey to make toward unity and form.

If he had come home in 1885 with the thought of settling in Norway, he soon gave up all such plans. Certainly, before he left Molde he had made up his mind that he wanted to and must remain in foreign lands. In October, 1885, he again took up his abode in Munich. In a sense he had never moved away from there, for in all the five years he had lived in Italy he had left paintings and various other furnishings stowed away in a loft in Munich. Next to Rome there was no other place where he liked the climate so well, and in some ways he felt even more at home in Munich. He had more in common with the intellectual life there. His son's studies no longer bound him to Rome, and in Munich he was nearer to all necessary business transactions in connection with his books.

He now secured living quarters there, renting a suite of pretentious, but somewhat high and cold rooms in the great business street Maximilianstrasse. There he remained for almost

six years. Indeed, he became more firmly established than he had been anywhere else for many, many years, for he lived there not only in winter, but also stayed in the city summer after summer.

He led the same regular life as he had done before, was indeed even more bound by schedule. In the afternoon he went out walking in the streets—always clad in a long coat and high hat—stopping where people gathered, watching carefully everything that went on. Every evening at precisely the same hour he entered the Cafe Maximilian, in the same street in which he lived, and there he sat for an hour or less, always at the same table, drank beer or cognac, or both beer and cognac, and read the papers, or pretended to be reading them. Perhaps he was more occupied in observing people about him. Once in a while he went to the Authors' Association, and he liked to have guests at his home. But his true life he lived within himself. He never again permitted himself to be drawn into such a controversy as the one which agitated him so strongly in the fall of 1885.

STRUGGLE WITHIN THE CONSCIENCE

THE clash with life in Norway released a new drama in Ibsen. Something of the subject for it he already had within him from before. Much of the matter which had fermented in his thoughts when he made his first notations for *The Wild Duck* had not found room in this play. Hjalmar Ekdal had not become the great minded dreamer which the author had first intended him to be—one who within himself had broken with all inherited social teaching, but who dared not come forward freely with his revolutionary ideas. The finished Hjalmar Ekdal had never had in him the possibility for anything great, he was born to be a dabbler, to be an even more “abominable poet” than Peer Gynt.

Ibsen carried within him the image of a man who really yearned after great achievement, but who came into conflict with his own “sensitive nature” when there was a question of stepping out into life for tangible action—a man who suffered from the contrast between the two things “to wish and to will.” The whole of this temperament he took much more directly out of his own soul. He knew within himself that he was both bold and timid, eager to fight great battles, and anxious about his own person, apprehensive for the silk hat and the gloves.

He might indeed have liked in reality what he expressed in

a conversation at this time Someone was surprised upon hearing that Ibsen was opposed to the prohibition of corporal punishment in the schools, and asked "But would you have liked that your own son should be whipped?" "No," answered Ibsen with a grin, "but that he should whip!" He himself had experienced that no such one-sided arrangement was possible—that if he wanted to strike, there were plenty of those who would strike back On his last visit home he had ventured further into the forefront than he had for a long time been accustomed to, and he had been mixed up in a conflict which both irritated and embarrassed him He had brought all the Norwegian party fanaticism actively down upon his own head, and it had made him indignant and alarmed at the same time The dualism within his soul must even more than formerly become a question that gnawed and burned

Moreover, it chanced that while he was in Norway he met a man who seemed to him an embodiment of the powers which contended within himself It was a young friend from his earliest days in Rome, the Swedish poet, Count Carl Snoilsky Snoilsky had a remarkable career both in authorship and in life When he was between twenty and thirty years old—and that was the time when Ibsen became acquainted with him—verse had flowed freely and easily from his pen, there was exultation and courage in his poetry But then, all at once, he became silent He had gone into government service in Stockholm, he had married, and for a whole decade it was not possible for him to write a poem "I have wasted my life," he wrote in 1874, "and am not able to retrieve it" But at last he broke the bonds that weighed him down, when he was close to forty

years old he left the government service and set out for foreign travel, he dissolved his marriage and married another woman. Suddenly he was able to write again, he published one collection of verse after another. This was near the beginning of the eighties. And the change went still deeper than merely from lethargy to new creative power. The sensitive nobleman and fastidious devotee of art was stirred by the class war and the democratic revolt in his times, and he longed to come into concord with the people, to make friends with the workman, "the serving brother." But his own past, his social and intellectual background, hindered and limited him. There is a letter from him, from the year 1883, to a friend who would have him enter the current social conflict with his writing, a letter which in itself is interesting because it points to what Ibsen had done. "Literature has certainly a public influence, as Ibsen has shown, when it takes up social subjects for debate.

But in any event my powers are not sufficient for so high a mission, for so wide a sphere. My ambitions do not aim so high. Besides, I know my chief limitation—that of not having from the time of my youth lived the life of the people, training and education in a one-sided classic direction have made me, like the overwhelming majority of our writers, unable to speak to the deeper strata of the people in a language they understand. Unlike my colleagues, however, I often painfully feel this wall, this limitation, and seek to overcome it."

It was a man with such a longing combined with such a sense of impotence who came to greet Ibsen one summer day at Molde. Ibsen had recently spoken of the intellectual nobility for which he hoped, and here it seemed as if the true nobility

came to meet him, yet with a flaw in its soul—a nobility too fragile to meet life's coarse realities hand to hand. During the two or three days that the two poets now were together they opened their hearts to each other as they had never done before, they felt themselves related to each other because of the very dualism which lived in both of them. Four years later Snoulsky wrote a poem about Molde, and he seemed to see a resemblance to Ibsen in its contrasting scenes of beautiful flower gardens and steep mountains

*I ne'er shall forget an August night
In Molde, with Ibsen nigh—
He appears to my thought as the mountain height
Which loses itself in the sky*

*I see his brow—its powerful form
O'ercast with a deepening frown,
As at the approach of a darkling storm
When the century's sun goes down*

*But swift at the greeting of one he knows
His face is bright as the day,
And over the lips that so firmly close
The kindest smile will play*

*The brooding thinker I still can see
'Mongst mountains and clouds that frown,
But I do not forget how he smiled to me
'Mid the roses of Molde town*

In February, 1886, Ibsen wrote to thank Snoilsky for the companionship at Molde "This association, meeting you again, and the acquaintance with your splendid, great minded wife, has been to us a beneficent enrichment It is without comparison the noblest memory we have taken with us from our stay in Norway" And in 1889 he wrote "You may be assured that I never forget the days we spent together at Molde" Snoilsky helped him to find a living form for the spiritual problem which filled his mind, with Snoilsky as model he could draw the man with whom his next drama was to deal—Rosmer in *Rosmersholm*

In the same letter in which he sent his thanks to Snoilsky for their meeting, he said "I for my part am fully occupied with a new drama, which I have long had in mind, and for which I made more careful studies during my visit to Norway this summer" Already in April, 1885, he had written to his publisher about a new play he had in the making, and which he even thought he might have ready by fall But when he finally had it completed, not that fall but the following one, he said that the play was to be regarded as a result of studies and observations which he had occasion to make during his visit to Norway the foregoing summer To Georg Brandes he wrote at the same time "The impressions, experiences, and observations from my visit to Norway last summer had for a long time a disturbing effect upon me Only after I had arrived at full clearness regarding what I had experienced, and had drawn my conclusions therefrom, could I think of translating the result into a literary production" The visit to Norway had

so stirred up his mind that, month after month, he went about pondering how the psychological drama which he dimly saw could take form in such a conflict. It was not before well into the month of May in 1886 that he saw it clearly enough to begin working it out.

In his thoughts he laid the setting in Molde, or rather at the old manor house Moldegård just within the town limits, a place which he had often passed on his walks. There he saw the provocative contrast between inherited aristocracy and new radicalism. The owner, old Thuis Møller, was a bold oppositⁱonist, never afraid of conflict. But it was not this man whom Ibsen made master of the old lonely house, it was his friend the Swedish poet who in his thoughts seemed as genuine a Norwegian, because he was a born brooder, full of questions about life's meaning and man's obligations.

This man became at one and the same time a revolutionist and a captive. He longed—as all Norwegians did—for sun and warmth, for freedom. He wanted to “create the true rule of the people in the country,” he wanted to “make all the people in the country noblemen,” to “liberate the minds and chasten the wills.” Ibsen had therefore first thought of giving him a nobleman's name, he experimented with such old Norwegian family names as Boldt Romer, later with Sejerhjem and Rosenhjem, and finally he combined Rosenhjem and Romer to Rosmer. That did not make the nobility so obvious, but it reminded at least himself of the aristocratic origin. This noble man had the great dream of becoming an awakener of the people.

Within him, however, there were powers which held him bound to the past. Ibsen symbolized these powers by the phantoms that haunted the grounds, the white horses which made their appearance before misfortune and accidents. At first he even named the play for this symbol, calling it *White Horses*. This too, like the mental specters in *Ghosts*, was a sort of message from the past, and the spiritual struggle in *Rosmer* was in reality the history of Mrs. Alving repeated. It was a fundamental question with Ibsen, one which had burned in him ever since his youth—how the past could live on in a man's character and take vengeance on him. It had more and more become a psychological problem. In Mrs. Alving it was still a struggle with powers which training and society had established in her mind, in *Rosmer* it became a struggle with the heritage in his own temperament. Here Ibsen had come down to the deepest groundwork of the soul, and if he had let it remain uncertain which power won in Mrs. Alving, he wanted to let us follow the inner struggle all the way to its conclusion in *Rosmer*.

He placed *Rosmer* in the midst of the worst political excitement in Norway, in an acrimonious and reckless agitation which it required a strong and perhaps somewhat coarse nature to stand up under. Such conditions must make it still more difficult for *Rosmer* to break through to full freedom. The struggle in him went much deeper than merely to political emancipation. Here again, just as in *Brand*, politics in Ibsen's hands turned into religion and ethics. *Rosmer* was a priest, as *Brand* had been. But when he wished to free himself religiously as well as politically, he struck harder than ever against the nar-

row outlook of the Norwegian people Ibsen had enough experience to build on in this respect, with anger and delight he could create persons who were typical outgrowths of the intellectual suppression in Norway Rector Kroll, with his store of knowledge and his keen mind—for that very reason so much more dangerous in his intellectual pride, so much more fanatical in his contempt for the miserable people—was drawn after Ibsen's "Hollander" friends and filled with turns of speech from *Morgenbladet* There is also the editor, Peder Mortensgård, personally emancipated enough, indeed so emancipated that he can unscrupulously reckon with only that fraction of freedom which his readers and the party can stand, a genuine rabbit who burrows his way forward underground, forward to control over fettered souls His very name has become the symbol of the slippery time serving spirit in the world of journalism

Beside these persons who were, each in his own way, to raise a wall against Rosmer, Ibsen placed others who were to throw light upon the fundamental question in his play from various sides There was the vagabond Ulric Brendel, a sad and ridiculous caricature of an emancipation which had become only intellectual emptiness and noisy ranting The name was taken from Skien, the manner and speech from a man who had tried his luck as actor in Christiania in the fifties, but who left the theater because he was not given only great rôles Further, Ibsen had at first intended to include two young girls, daughters of Rosmer by his first marriage They were to show how abilities and aspirations were suppressed in the narrow Norwegian society But they were taken out again Ibsen did not have use for

them this time They would have made Rosmersholm too much of a home for living personalities, and it was to the dead powers that Ibsen wished to give supremacy here

The most remarkable feature in the play, that which enters most unexpectedly into the drama, and which in reality makes it something wholly new, is the woman he has placed over against Rosmer as ally and antithesis—Rebecca West Perhaps she proceeded somehow out of contrast to the “undeveloped wife” whom in the notations for *The Wild Duck* he had given to his dreamer, and who held her husband down in spiritual serfdom In *Rosmersholm*, Ibsen has made this marriage a part of the past, and has instead given Rosmer a new woman companion who helps him forward in the ways of freedom He found help for his characterization in the memory of Fru Laura Gundersen, whom he had recently seen play Lady Inger in Bergen, the scintillating variety in her art taught him much about feminine psychology and about the imperceptible transitions between opposite moods It was therefore a great disappointment to Fru Gundersen that she could not play Rebecca Ibsen presumably thought she was too old, and chose someone else for the part But Fru Gundersen was of the opinion that she would have managed the role, and she described Rebecca in a single image “She shall be as the black night with sparkling stars”

At first it had not been quite clear to the dramatist what should be the relation between Rosmer and Rebecca, in one of the drafts for the play he has made her the second Mrs Rosmer, and the thing which ruins their life together is Rosmer’s discovery that she has a “past” The whole relation be

tween them seems originally—at least on her side—to be chiefly external, like an everyday love affair. In the oldest notations, from December, 1885, in which she has not yet been given a name, she is described as “emancipated, warm blooded, somewhat reckless, but within a refined form.” In a later draft we read “She is an intriguer, and she loves him.” But little by little she was given a spiritual life, a spiritual growth, which required new and special study, and which made her at least as much a main character of the drama as Rosmer. For if Rosmer, who wanted to become free, had to struggle against old powers in his soul, Rebecca, who had been born free, came gradually under the influence of new powers—the old Rosmer view of life.

In consequence, Rosmer, too, was made over. To him it was no longer a matter of freeing himself from all that was old, it became a necessity for him to save the old, to take it with him into the new. It was in reality from the old that he must and could win that “nobility of character” on which he wanted to build the new freedom. He must feel himself clean and blameless, and it was the same demand which gradually took effect on Rebecca too, that was what ennobled her.

When this had become clear to the dramatist, the conclusion of the play was given an altogether different content. At first he had intended that, when Rosmer discovered what Rebecca had been, “the dæmonic” should awaken in him, and that in his “pain and bitterness” he should die, taking Rebecca with him into death. But now it turned out that Rebecca herself could see no escape but death, she could not live, could not

partake in the struggle for liberation, since she was not blameless

The conflict which Ibsen had intended to depict, between "the outworn and the coming consciences," thus became not only a contest of conscience against conscience, but even more a struggle within each separate conscience. In this struggle it was no longer a question of victory for one conscience or the other, both had their right, and the future must be a conciliation between the new freedom and the old demands of duty. It was the dream from *Emperor and Galilean* in a new form, and therefore it was natural enough that Ibsen now, immediately after writing *Rosmersholm*, recalled in a speech of 1887 the Third Empire, in which he still believed.

One can thus in a way say that there was an ethical teaching in his new play, but again, as in *The Wild Duck*, demand is raised against demand, and one dare not say certainly on which side the author stands. He is full of sympathy with the finely tempered morality of Rosmer, that which ennobles people and makes their will pure. But with Rebecca West he can sigh over the fact that she should lose her free, reckless will, and he sees that the Rosmer morality may ennoble the spirit but at the same time kill happiness. There is here an inner cleavage, and both thoughts, both kinds of conscience, live in the author.

With this double vision he understands people better than formerly. The conflict which he had been drawn into in Norway had aroused his anger and given impetus to his imagination. But the thing which out of indignation and unrest settled down in the bottom of his soul, was a burning desire to follow

the conflict deep into the hearts of living persons. He was no longer so concerned with the ethical questions themselves, with ethical criticism, with the wish to "move boundary posts." The thing which caught his interest was the drama that took place in the human soul when the ethical forces met in conflict. And it was the conflict in his own soul which above all taught him to understand these powers—the conflict between what he might dream about bold life work and all that bound and hampered his will so that he never could become anything but a writer.

He had always been a searcher of souls, curious about the deepest emotions and powers in human hearts, his strongest desire had been to create characters which were given the breath of life in his imagination. But now it was as if this need pushed everything else aside within him. Even while he was pondering the plans for *Rosmersholm*, he said to a German friend "Each one of us must strive to make the social order in the world better than it is this I am doing to the best of my ability." The next year, 1887, he said in a speech that his "polemic interests were decreasing," and he felt that his "writing was about to take on new forms."

He was now almost sixty years old. It was natural that his desire to fight should be lessened. But his wisdom increased, and he penetrated deeper into the life of the human soul than ever before.

SUPPRESSED DESIRES

THERE is one thing in *Rosmersholm* which distinguishes this drama in a peculiar way from all the older works of Ibsen. It is the important place given to nature's influence on the human soul.

It is in Rebecca West that we meet this new element. The characters he had drawn before had never been thus bound to nature. They had felt rather lonely and disheartened when they found themselves out among woods and mountains. In his first youth, in the Grimstad days, Ibsen had heard "the voice of Nature," but later he had more and more thought only of people, thought of them in their relation to other people, not to natural surroundings. The only one whom he had tried to depict as bound to nature was the Grouse of Justedal, and despite three distinct attempts, he had not been able to complete this play to his own satisfaction. For the rest, his characters always longed to get away from nature. Eline in *Lady Inger* walked alone by the fjord and dreamed that she was in happier climes. Hiördis in *The Vikings* lived through the Northern winters as through long nights and through every night as a long winter, she, too, only longed to get away. Gregers Werle had walked by himself in the great Høidal forests and mused and pondered until his conscience grew sick. Brand was perhaps the one who in his innermost self resembled

most closely the nature in which he was born, but he lived at war with the paltriness which the same harsh nature had engendered in the people. The only one who had sought forgetfulness and shelter away from human beings was he who fled from the valley up to the fells, but his soul became petrified, and he was no longer wholly human.

In the case of Rebecca West nature became a spiritual force. There was something mysterious, something aside from ordinary human qualities in her temperament, and she laid a spell as of witchcraft upon those who met her. True, she had been born and brought up in the North, in Finmark, the home of trolls, and her father's real name, Gamvik, recalls her origin, *gamme* being the Norwegian word for the sod hut of the Lapps. She had in her soul something of the same fire as had Hiordis. It came upon her like a storm from the sea, like the storms that come sweeping in during the winters up there in the North—impossible to resist, but when the storm subsided and quiet came into the soul, then the calm was as that of a bird cliff under the midnight sun. Thus the sea lived in Rebecca. Ulric Brendel spoke more truly than he himself knew when, in his chattering, he called her a "mermaid," and she compares herself toward the close of the play with the sea trolls which, according to the old legends, clung to the ships and hindered the sailing.

It was the summer at Molde that brought nature, and especially the sea, so vividly to Ibsen's mind. The memory of Grimstad days had given him a longing for the sea, and now that he had seen it again he longed even more for it, but he wanted to see it still freer and wilder than at Molde.

The year he wrote *Rosmersholm* his work kept him in Munich

all summer, but when he had the play off his hands, he determined that the next summer, 1887, he wanted to live beside the sea in Jutland, perhaps as far out as the Skaw itself. This thought he put into action. In July he came northward to Jutland from Munich. As the Skaw was too crowded with artists and other guests, he kept away from there. Instead, he found lodgings in the secluded little town of Sæby, somewhat farther south. In Molde he had stood hour after hour gazing down into the sea, and in Sæby he likewise stood for hours each day looking out over the water. Much as he liked sunshine and warmth, he had nursed some hope of seeing the ocean in a storm. "Should the bad weather," he wrote from Munich, "follow us up there, the sea will only be the grander." The summer proved to be an especially fine one, but at any rate it was the free, open sea that spread out before his eyes, and it affected him deeply.

At a celebration soon after (October 5) in the home of his publisher, Hegel, he said in a speech that this summer he had "discovered the sea." He said that the smooth, pleasant Danish sea, which one could come close to without feeling that mountains cut off the approach, had given his soul rest and peace, and that he carried away memories of the sea which would hold significance for his life and writing. In general, he spoke much at this time about his longing for that which could give rest to the spirit. At the beginning of the year, when German authors and artists honored him in Berlin, he had said that the hearty friendliness he met there gave him a pleasure which must leave traces in his writing. From Jutland he went first over to Sweden, and at a celebration in Göteborg (September 12) he spoke of how much less eager for battle he was now than formerly, he said

that friendship and sympathy helped him to enter on the new path which his writing must now seek. A few days later (September 24) he described himself in a speech in Stockholm as an "optimist," a man who believed that the world was entering a new epoch with reconciliation of old differences and with happiness for humanity.

In conversation he even said that he could well regard himself as a socialist, it was to his faith in a new era that he thus gave a name. He had noticed—and he was glad of it—that in various aspects of ethical criticism he had arrived at the same conclusions as the students of social science. This strengthened his faith that a new intellectual and social life was in the making. He believed that it would soon come of itself, and he pointed to the theory of Evolution which natural science had built up.

Yet he had not become, and he would not become, a party man. "For it has become to me a necessity of nature to work entirely on my own responsibility," he wrote two years later on the very subject of his relation to social democracy. When he came from Stockholm to Copenhagen, he did not, this time, go to the radical Students' Association, but accepted an invitation to come to the old Students' Society (October 1) after he had been assured that it was non political. His old brother in arms, Georg Brandes, was displeased with this desertion. In a letter to Fru Snoilsky he said "Ibsen was here and fraternized this time, for variety, with the reactionary Students' Society. I had an opportunity to speak with him a little, but did not get much out of it." It is clear that there was a shifting in Ibsen's mood—a going over to milder views and more peaceable thoughts.

He saw his own task in "depicting human characters and human destinies" The problem to him was how people should win intellectual freedom and strength to face the future With this problem he had worked in all his ethical-critical plays, and in all of them—from *Pillars of Society* down to *Rosmersholm*—he had been able to condense his demand into the words, "truth and freedom" The drama consisted in the conflict within the soul between the desire for freedom and inhibitions of various sorts, and he had always to try new soul experiments in this conflict

But the aim itself had shifted in his consciousness Before he had always had a definite purpose in everything he wrote, each time he set to work, he seemed to stand before a task, a life effort When the work was finished, he saw well enough that action had become literature, time and again he had to admit that he was a poet and nothing else—a poet with a strong and personal view of life, no doubt, but still always a poet, not a creator of a moral system or a builder of society Now it had become his desire to do only the one thing to create living people in poetic form

In the first half year after he had written and published *Rosmersholm* he was so occupied with business, especially with theatrical productions in Germany, that he had no time to think of writing But while he was in Jutland new drama subjects arose in him, and he said to an acquaintance that he hoped to have "some whimsy ready for next year" To another he said that the sea should play a part in his next work

In reality they were thoughts of earlier date which now ripened in him In the notes for *The Wild Duck* he had some words about "the sixth sense" and "magnetic influence" Now it was the

sea which became this magnetic power, this mysterious thing which is "will less" yet binds the human will "The sea can hypnotize Nature has the power to do that" A new struggle with hidden forces of the soul became vividly present to his imagination

Again he went about for a long time, merely letting the subject grow in his mind What had once been a constraint upon him he had now made into a conscious art Formerly he had often, when subjects and thoughts strained in him for expression, begun at once to work on them and to shape them into form But in almost every case it became evident that they needed a long period of growth within him, and that he might strive in vain with his material, laying plans and thinking that he soon had it ready, only to find that it was wasted effort and frustrated hope. One need only remember how long and painfully he labored with *Love's Comedy*, with *Brand*, with *Emperor and Galilean*, with *Pillars of Society* He thought he knew what he wanted, and yet he could not impart real life to it

Little by little he had learned that he could not force his way forward to the dramatic visions of which he caught glimpses far away It was of no use to be impatient He must wait He had to let the visions grow and strengthen and clarify as if of themselves, and he knew that one day they would suddenly appear before his inner eyes, in fullness of light and life Experience had taught him what scientific psychology later found out—that underneath the conscious thought there was a process of quiet but fruitful work of creation Henri Bergson built his theory of this largely upon what he had observed in the poets Now Ibsen took this power into his service, no longer attempting to hasten

the process, but letting the growth follow its own laws. The years had given him patience.

At the same time he had gained an insight into the subconscious mind, which made his writing deeper and gave it new refractions of light. If his anger no longer flamed so mightily in him and fed his written productions with its fire, he had now a finer sense for the hidden movements within the souls of men.

Or perhaps most of all within the souls of women. It is characteristic that, though *Rosmersholm* was originally intended to be a drama about Rosmer, it was finally Rebecca West who became in fact the main character, and both of his next two plays became dramas of feminine psychology. The reason was the same as that which had induced him to make women, as a matter of course, the revolutionists in his plays of social criticism. Social pressure and school education had not yet been able to suppress the natural, self-directed thought and emotional life of the woman. There had not collected so thick a crust around the subconscious in her mind. A poet who was sensitive and responsive to the invisible in life must inevitably feel related to such a feminine soul. "We women and poets" was an expression which Björnson had once used. Ibsen might have used it too, and just now, as he more and more sought the subconscious, it involuntarily came to take on for him the form of femininity.

He had come home to Munich in the beginning of October, 1887, and eight months passed before the new subject had worked itself into a vital form within him. Finally, June 5, 1888, he made the first rough notations for the drama which had now been born in his mind. But only five days later he was already in full progress with the writing itself, and through the summer

and fall he finished the play which he first called *The Mermiad* and later gave the somewhat less symbolic name, *The Lady from the Sea*

Here the sea became at once a spiritual power and a symbol. It became the lure of the unknown—and perhaps of the primeval in human beings themselves. Ibsen had heard of the guess which Haeckel had once ventured (in *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*, 1868) that a fish was the first link in the evolutionary chain which led to the human being, and he asked himself "Are there still rudiments thereof in the human mind? In some human minds?" The dream of the sea thus came to rise from the depths of the soul.

Ibsen knew a woman who in a remarkable way was bound to the sea—his own mother-in-law, Magdalene Thoresen. She had spent her childhood on the coast of Jutland, beside the peaceful Little Belt, but there was storm within her soul, and when she came to Norway at the age of twenty-three and became a minister's wife at Sunnmøre, she was powerfully affected by the Norwegian nature and most of all by the sea. It seemed to her that for the first time she found herself. She could hardly live away from the sea, even in old age she felt that she must go out every day to swim in the surf. Ibsen could take many of the outward traits for his *Lady from the Sea* from her, and at first he christened her with the name *Thora*. Later he exchanged this for the old Norwegian ship's name *Ellida*, taken from the *Saga of Frithjof the Bold*. There the name is, as a matter of fact, a masculine word, meaning something like "the storm goer." Such a name gave a stronger suggestion of storm and

mysterious troll powers—that ship *Ellidi* in the story was almost like a living person in fighting its way against evil spirits that tried to drag it down. Tru Thoresen had in her youth gone through a dangerous experience of love, and she had broken away by fleeing to Norway. Always there lived in her mind a struggle between the old and the new love. The longing for the sea which Ibsen had seen so strong in her, and of which he had felt not a little in his own soul, became in his thought merely a symbol of all longing toward the hidden, the uncertain.

In the summer at Sæby he had been deeply stirred by what he had heard of a young lady from that town. She had carried within herself a yearning, a thirst for a richer and freer life. She had wanted to become a poet, but was consumed by the struggle, and shot herself, only twenty one years old. This had happened four years before Ibsen came there. He inquired minutely about her, he went to her home and looked at pictures of her, he went to see her grave, he read the books that she had left. He seemed to feel how it was the sea that had put the longing into her.

It is in a way remarkable that, although it was chiefly Danish women who gave him living examples of how the sea influenced the human mind (Magdalene Thoresen, however, regarded herself as Norwegian—as born again of the Norwegian nature), yet this feeling appeared to his thought as something in a special sense Norwegian. "People in Norway," he said to a German friend, while he was at work on *The Lady from the Sea*, "are spiritually under the domination of the sea. I do not believe that other people can fully understand it." He felt it in himself, and thereby he felt himself rooted in Norway. Though he had little

of the nature lover in himself, yet it was Norwegian nature that lived in him, and he thought of the action of the play as going on in Romsdalen, around Molde

All of the "magnetic" power in nature—what it became customary in the eighties to call hypnotism—he personified for himself in the strange man with fish eyes, the man to whom Ellida had once betrothed herself, and here he fastened upon something he had heard during his summer in Molde. There a lady from Nordland had one evening told him all sorts of strange legends and happenings, among them the story of a Finlander who by means of the troll power in his eyes had induced a minister's wife to go with him away from husband, children, and home. Ibsen became entirely silent as he listened to this story, and sat gazing before him. A person moved in to Finnmark from Finland had in the popular thought somewhat of a troll nature, and in Ibsen the story merged with another story which he heard at Molde—about a seaman who was gone for many years, so that they believed him to be dead, but who suddenly came home and found his wife married to another. Thus he gave the Finlander a hold from former days upon the woman he would draw away with him. At the same time Ibsen remembered the way in which he himself in youth had bound Rikke Holst to him, they had slipped their rings on a keyholder and thrown them into the fjord—the sea was to bind them together.

Thus the "magnetism" in the fish eyes became a power within the soul of the one whom they drew to themselves, a heritage and a memory of former days. This is the element which clearly shows a connection between *The Lady from the Sea* and many of Ibsen's older plays. He had at first even intended that Ellida

should have broken her youthful engagement with the seaman because of social and moral prejudices derived from her upbringing, and she should be still struggling with such prejudices. This aspect of the heritage from the past he pushed more and more out of the new drama. It was emancipation of another sort that he wanted to penetrate, the struggle to gain full control over the subconscious powers in the soul.

Ellida has married, but involuntarily she is in her thought living in union with the runaway and perhaps lost seaman. It is a secret which she hardly dares admit to herself. She is afraid of it, and she is fascinated by it. She lives on the border line between what lies in the shadow in her soul and what lies in light. It is a disease which preys upon her will, and less and less she is in control of herself. Involuntarily her husband and stepchildren help to drive her deeper into this sickly dream life, for they keep her outside of the memories they have among themselves. But then the great crisis comes. Various events have brought to the fore in her the thought of him to whom she was at one time bound with such strange power, she lives in the utmost tension. Then he returns, the mysterious man with the fish eyes. At the last moment she is saved from him and from her own mental confusion, because her husband frees her, so that she may choose on her own responsibility. When the present marriage is no longer binding upon her, the attraction to the former union loses its power over her. It is an obsession that loses its hold upon her soul, she becomes well and free immediately.

The Lady from the Sea closed with the words "freedom under full responsibility." It sounded like a campaign cry, and it was upon this phrase that Ibsen's contemporaries chiefly centered

the strife between original, suppressed will or desire and acquired, thought-directed will. With poetic insight Ibsen had seemed to see this beforehand. He had present in his mind a woman who felt herself hampered and bound in her marriage because she had married not for love but for material support, and in whom there consequently awoke a series of distorted imaginings which gripped her mind in a way that seemed like bewitchment. She needed a physician, and quite naturally Ibsen gave her a physician for husband—he had first intended to make the husband a lawyer. Moreover, Ibsen discovered the thing that could bring healing, he removed the very root of the sickness, he gave back to Ellida her full sense of freedom. That was the personal demand in himself, and it became a means of curing souls.

Thus the mystery in *The Lady from the Sea* disappears, and the deep insight into the life of the soul becomes evident. But at the same time it becomes clear that the thing which had driven Ibsen to ponder these questions was the spiritual demand for truth and freedom which always burned in him. As early as in *Love's Comedy* he had declared war upon all marriage which was not built upon full freedom in the union, and now he wished to picture a marriage which, from being a "business arrangement," became a free and generous giving, Ellida was to experience what Nora missed—"the miracle."

We can see even in small things how the new play had its roots in older ideas. The consumptive sculptor he had already sketched in the first notes for *The Wild Duck*, and he had even named a German painter who was to be used as model, the two step

daughters in the play he had taken from the preparatory work for *Rosmersholm*. But the main thing is his persistent struggle for complete emancipation.

It is a bright view of life which dominates *The Lady from the Sea* here there is victory over spiritual bondage. It may remind one of the bright faith which broke out in *Pillars of Society*, when Ibsen for the first time raised his demand for truth in open challenge against the prevalent ethics, then, too, he thought that the demand would bring freedom and victory in its wake. Later came disappointment and doubt. Now he had found a new battle ground and new weapons for the spiritual warfare, and again it seems as if faith in victory flamed upward within him. But this time, too, the reaction came, and the next play represented the tragic defeat in the struggle for spiritual freedom.

In the summer of 1889, while he had not yet any new work in the making, he used his free time for a visit to his beloved Gossensass. He had not been there for five years. After his settling in Munich in 1885 his work had kept him in the city for two summers, and the other two he had traveled north to Norway and to Denmark. In Gossensass he could not now secure the hotel room which he had always had before, and that changed his habitual life somewhat. But he was received as an old friend, and he was happy. It was this summer that the village dedicated his old lookout on the hill as an Ibsenplatz. Difficult as it now was for him to struggle up the steep ascent, he performed his duty, walked at the head of the festal group clear to the top, and received with friendliness and dignity all the homage that was accorded him. Otherwise, he preferred to be left to himself.

—both at meals and on his short daily walks. The only ones with whom he chatted much were the ladies, and especially the young ladies. In his quiet way he always took pleasure in feminine beauty and grace, and besides he could in the company of women best satisfy his psychological interests.

Among the young ladies he met in Gossensass there was one who aroused and satisfied this need of his more than all the others, and with whom he came to form a special relationship. This was Emilie Bardach from Vienna, at that time only eighteen years old, beautiful, and dreamy-eyed. Ibsen had noticed her in the dining room, and at the great celebration for him he met her. Afterwards they were often together, and chatted of things great and small. When she was about to leave, a week before he did, he gave her his photograph with the inscription "To the May sun in a September life." Did he come to love her? Who can know? But he felt warm and happy in her company—and a little tense. She brought youth to him and stirred new dreams—but also questions. Curiously he looked into this young feminine soul, in which contrasts and puzzles half-concealed, half-revealed themselves. It gave both dizziness and joy. She wrote to him when she had reached her home in Vienna, and he answered, for four months the correspondence lasted.

There is a strange duality in his letters, they seem to draw and discourage at the same time. He reminds her of benches beside the Pflersch brook or window seats in the hotel salon that are now lonely and deserted, but he does not say that it was she who once had given them such delightful life. He asks if they performed a *Dummkheit* or a *Tollheit* when they met each other, and he answers that it was a natural fate, but he asks her to

ponder it for herself, and more than once he says that she herself must find out what he means—he breaks off the thought half expressed. He tells how he thinks of and dreams of her in all sorts of situations and activities, she becomes a mysterious princess to him, and he cannot solve the riddle. She is constantly with him in his imaginative life, and he incites her, too, to dreams and fantasy. His letters seem almost to be psychological experiments, but he realizes the danger in them, and finally he breaks off the correspondence. "It is a matter of conscience with me," he writes to her. He does not wish to keep her any longer involved in a half life which can never become wholly serious, and it has become a torment to himself.

He had been permitted to gaze deep into the feelings and dreams which stirred in a young woman, and he felt that the experience must some time take poetic form within him. First, however, he must see it from a distance. But the experience itself gave immediate impetus to his urge to write. In his first letter to Miss Bardach he said "A new work is beginning to sprout in me." It was as in his youth, when love sounded within his soul, his poetic visions were awakened. Four or five years after the incident with Miss Bardach he read an essay by Georg Brandes about the love affair between the young Marianne von Willemer and the sixty year old Goethe, telling how new poetry was born of their life together. This struck him with "personal interest," and he wrote "When I think of the character of Goethe's production in the years concerned, and the rebirth of his youth, it seems that I should have been able to see for myself how he must have been favored with something as beautiful to him as to meet with Marianne von Willemer." At least some-

thing of this had touched him now When he received a greeting from Miss Bardach on his seventieth birthday, in 1898, he wrote back "The summer in Gossensass was the happiest, fairest in all my life I hardly dare to think of it And yet I must, always Always!" It was a renewal of youth that had come to him, with new life for his genius and with new knowledge of the human soul

Of his new work he wrote to Miss Bardach in October, 1889 "I will try to bring into it the bright summer life But that it will close in a dark mood, I feel within me" A month later he was fully occupied with it, thinking and ruminating It turned out to be not at all a work about his latest experience Yet it contained many of the questions which had been raised in him, and many of the things he had experienced—first and foremost the apprehension regarding the courage to live and the responsibility in living It was the tragedy of *Hedda Gabler*

He saw before his inner vision a conflict between opposite impulses deep in the soul, and the vision became a drama between people and within people He connected it with something which he had perhaps heard of when he was in Norway in 1885—a competition between two young scholars, one of them married to a society woman of extravagant and expensive tastes This he bound up with various special and remarkable incidents which he had heard of from different sources All of this, however, was merely as the naked framework about which to hang the drama itself, it gave something for his creative imagination to attach itself to From out of his own soul he took two temperaments, one might almost say two intellectual worlds in conflict, and arrayed them against each other in living persons

On the one side a respectable and everyday bourgeois spirit, with all commendable bourgeois virtues—the whole house of Tesman the tireless drudge Jørgen, who does not raise his vision above the nearest undertakings—the good hearted self sacrificing soul, Aunt Julie, and the servant in the family, the respectable maid, Berte. On the other side, a world full of spiritual unrest, liberated from moral prejudices and bonds—indeed, mostly without moral stability, trembling in excitement before the problems of life, with a longing outward, toward something or other that should be remarkable and great. The poorest creature in the play is the pleasure-seeker, Judge Brack. But then there is the gifted scholar, Eilert Lovborg, he who writes about “the civilizing forces of the future and its probable line of development,” but who carries in himself a dangerous fire, a storm against everything that binds and hampers the impulses. And finally Hedda Gabler herself, the mysterious one, who carries the contrasts and the strife within her. In this feminine soul Ibsen has laid down much of that which strove within himself.

“Hedda’s despair,” we find in one of the notes for the play “is the idea that there presumably are so many possibilities for happiness in the world, but that she cannot get her eye on them. It is the lack of a life aim that torments her.” She is so curious about everything that goes on in life, and she wishes so much to look into the world which conceals itself from her, but still she does not want to be more than a spectator, she never dares to give herself, never dares to go into life with her own person. She turns aside all demands which involve responsibility, she will have nothing of “reality,” she flees from all this—she is afraid. She has in exaggerated degree the fear which had tor

mented Ibsen even from his childhood, the fear of scandal, of people's tongues. She has not been able to proceed beyond the æsthetic viewpoint in life, she wants to be free from all that is ugly. At the same time she is heartily tired of this half life, everything becomes unendurably tedious, she longs for power to mould a human destiny, envy and jealousy drive and push her on, and so she feels her way, wants to experiment. She does it with both Tesman and Løvborg, but mostly in roundabout ways, so that she shall not herself take on any responsibilities. In the first notations for the play she even uses Tesman as a tool in experimenting with Lovborg. But in the final form it is she herself who draws Lovborg on into wild ways, and it is she who makes him shoot himself. She thinks it is brave and great and beautiful that he dares to do this deed, and she has a feeling that she herself is taking part in life, though unseen. When it appears, nevertheless, that she is thereby in reality made responsible—that she becomes unfree through what she has done, and is compelled to obey the will of another—then she sees no way out but to flee from life. Life has found her out, and she must die.

When *Hedda Gabler* came out at Christmas time, 1890, it seemed less Norwegian than anything Ibsen had written earlier, and it is remarkable that for the two main characters in the play, the two scholars, he took his models among foreigners who were friends of his. Eilert Løvborg he drew from the gifted Danish literary scholar, Julius Høffory, who at that time was professor in Berlin and was a leader in the work of making Ibsen known in Germany. For Jørgen Tesman he took traits from a young German literary scholar with whom he had made friends

in Munich, and who was likewise a faithful apostle of Ibsen. But the other member of the Tesman family, Aunt Julie, was Norwegian enough in her origin, she was modeled after an old lady from Bergen in whose company Ibsen had spent much time during his years at Dresden. Eilert Lovborg had his root in older dramatic conceptions of Ibsen's. There can hardly be any doubt that his very name is hidden in the E. L. who is the main character in the notations for *The Wild Duck*, and who became Hjalmar Ekdal—the dreamer who makes no progress, whom life drags down into listlessness, and the line leads through the other dreamer, Rosmer, who in one of the drafts of *Rosmersholm* has the given name Eilert. There is a relationship between Lovborg and these two older namesakes of his, they all suffer from the contrast between dream and the will to act. In this respect they are all genuinely Ibsenesque, and Ibsen had even himself once in life experienced something of the tendency which led Eilert Lövborg to his downfall—the tendency to cut loose in reckless dissipation.

The thing most Norwegian in *Hedda Gabler* is the social background on which the play operates, the entire bourgeois way of thinking which holds sway over people, the snobbery which regards it as something very high to be a general's daughter, and all the consideration for what "people" think or say. The one who in this society seems least Norwegian is Hedda herself. She was born in Ibsen's own imagination, I do not know of any woman in his circle of acquaintances who might have been a pattern for her. Did he possibly, after all is said and done, find the "model" deep in himself? The wish which forces its way forward in Hedda, to gain power to mould a human destiny, was an

outburst from his own soul. This desire trembles underneath his letters to Emilie Bardach. In association with her he had ventured out upon something which he did not dare to complete, and from this experience he took the most strongly personal element in *Hedda Gabler*. It was his own defeat that he portrayed.

At the same time he made the refined, free Hedda a type of something general, both psychologically and socially. She was a product of the upper class society of the present day, as it might appear in all lands—it was “in the West End of the city,” that Ibsen laid his drama—a woman without aim and work in life, repressed by the laws which her society placed upon her. Therefore she became, practically speaking, a perfect example of the soul disease which the psychoanalysis of the twentieth century began especially to study and describe. By force she had suppressed those desires which strained at her senses and mind, she was filled with a longing which was never fully satisfied because she did not dare to yield. Therefore the desires took revenge, they led her out into a senseless game with everything that attracted and enticed her, and thus drove her into the dead lock from which only the pistol shot could rescue her. She had not the power to make herself spiritually free. Neither Tesman nor Judge Brack could help her, they only hindered her, so that there was no escape save in death.

I will not say that Ibsen understood the psychological relations which present day science has taught us to see. An indication that he did not is in the excessive number of reasons he gives for Hedda's actions. In one of the drafts for the play he lets Hedda say “Remember that I am an old man's child—and besides a senile man's—or at least a weak man's child. It may have

left its marks " This he has later deleted, but he has put in its place another spring of action the fact that Hedda is pregnant Experience gives strong enough evidence of how such a condition can disturb the equilibrium of a feminine temperament, and besides it brings to Hedda precisely that which she is most of all afraid of responsibility, the demands of life But it is not necessary to explain her behavior, the conclusion of the play is inevitable even without this addition

That which was to Ibsen the great life problem was how man's soul could erect and preserve its freedom In working to find the bottom of this problem he succeeded in penetrating more deeply into the movements of the soul than any earlier dramatist had been able to do, the only one who could be placed alongside of him was the Russian novelist, Dostojevski Especially in Rebecca West and Hedda Gabler, Ibsen created women whom all the greatest actresses in the world competed in giving life to They loved these creations, because they compelled them to a psychological study and a human representation with greater aims and finer art than any playwright had demanded of them before Ibsen now stood at the top in all world literature

WORLD CONTROVERSY ABOUT IBSEN

WHILE Ibsen buried himself more and more deeply in the life and problems of the soul, his whole army of controversial plays began to wage war for him on their own account throughout the world. The period of warfare in his own life was over, but just then the strife about him flared up higher than ever before and became a world conflict.

He had created a stir and won a name for himself in Germany with *Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House* in the years 1878-1880. He was no longer a stranger there. Within the next few years (1880-81) a lover of poetry, Ludwig Passarge, published *Peer Gynt*, *Brand*, and Ibsen's collection of poems in German translation, and in 1883 he published a whole book about Ibsen. This was the first German work that tried to give a complete picture of the Norwegian dramatist since Strodtmann had written about him ten years earlier, but Passarge's book came at a time when Ibsen was a dead man to the Germans, and it made little or no impression. An essay by Georg Brandes, which was translated in the periodical *Nord und Süd* about the same time, made a deeper impression on the readers, but even this could not revive Ibsen at that time. Both *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck* had to wait three years before they were translated into German. They seemed so bold and new to the artistic taste in Germany, they made so sharp a break with that "idealism," or small

town "idealizing," which still predominated in German literature and dramatic art, that neither translators and publishers nor theater directors dared to try them. A vigorous campaign was required before Ibsen *once more could gain a hearing in German intellectual life*, but in that struggle he gathered about him an army of enthusiastic Ibsen admirers, and became the intellectual chieftain of a new age.

It was Frau Maria von Borch who published *Ghosts* in German in 1884. She had herself experienced something like the subject of the play, she was strongly affected by it, and she felt impelled to translate it. Yet it lay dead for a couple of years. But in the spring of 1886 the young German author Felix Philipp, in Munich, happened to read the play, and he was fired with interest. He went to Ibsen and asked for permission to have it produced, and the director of the State Theater in Augsburg, August Grosse, ventured to take it. The police forbade the presentation of so immoral a play in public, and Grosse could thus make no money on it, but he played it, nevertheless, before a group of invited guests, on the afternoon of Good Friday, April 14, 1886. It could not be a model performance, but the young talent at the theater rose with the venture, and the spectators were swept along. Ibsen was there himself, and was applauded and called forward. It was a triumph. The police had aroused curiosity with their prohibition, the rumor was spread that the play was something unheard of in gross immorality, and people flocked to the bookshops to buy it. The poet Ludwig Fulda cast up accounts with German dramatic writing in the magazine *Die Nation*, and set Henrik Ibsen up against the whole convention bound spirit which dominated the theaters.

Boldly he pointed out that with Ibsen came the revolution, that in *Ghosts* the playwright had concentrated his attack upon the ruling social powers, and that here there was a question of the very foundations of morality. In the same spirit Otto Brahm wrote in *Deutsche Rundschau*. The controversy in art was bound up with the controversy in social tendencies.

There was one theater director in Germany who did not need to care about censor and police, namely, Duke Georg of Meiningen. He let *Ghosts* be shown at his theater a few days before Christmas, 1886. It was a splendid presentation, Maria Berg was Mrs. Alving, Alexander Barthel, Oswald. Ibsen was again the guest of the Duke, as he had been ten years earlier when *The Pretenders* was played, and he expressed his opinion about the production in the single word "Unsurpassable!" He did not stint on words of that kind on such occasions. The Duke promoted him now to the position of Commander of the Saxon Ernestine Order, and Ibsen was quite childishly pleased. He put on both the commander's star and the knight's cross. But the power of the Duke did not extend beyond the small duchy of Saxony Meiningen, and when he wanted to send his theatrical company out to other cities, the police interfered.

The greatest battle took place in Berlin two weeks later. There was an actor at the Residenz Theater who very strongly desired to play Oswald, and the director, Anton Anno, prepared to produce *Ghosts*. The Danish born Berlin professor, Julius Hoffory, urged the undertaking and encouraged the people of the theater, but the police, here too, laid down their prohibition. Otto Brahm and Paul Schlenther helped prepare the staging, and on Sunday, January 9, 1887, the drama was played. Here, as in Augsburg,

it was an afternoon performance for invited guests. People sensed excitement and scandal, 14,000 persons had tried to procure tickets, and the book was sold out in the bookshops, so that the publisher had to send 5000 additional copies to Berlin. Ibsen himself came to town and attended the performance. There was excitement in the air. Emanuel Reicher had his first Ibsen role there, playing Pastor Manders, Charlotte Frohn played Mrs. Alving, and the other rôles were also in good hands. As the play proceeded, the spectators were more and more deeply stirred. Between the acts Hoffory ran about and declared to all who cared to listen: "Now a new age is opening for German literature." At the end of each act it seemed as if all held their breath for a while, but then the applause burst like a storm through the hall. Time and again both author and actors had to come forward, and cries of "Long live Ibsen!" broke forth. A few tried to hiss, but the attempt was drowned in applause. It was a shock and a triumph at the same time.

Two days later there was a great banquet for Ibsen in the Hotel Kaiserhof, all the foremost members of literary Berlin being present. Otto Brahm made the chief speech. Ibsen was, he said, the great leader and pioneer in present-day drama, the bold proclaimer of truth and the poet realist who was to help the German theater out of the flat French technique and into real life. Ibsen thanked him. It seemed to him like a fairy tale that he, the stranger, should be received so heartily, and he hoped the time might come when he should not stand as a stranger in the great Germanic house.

The presentation of *Ghosts* in Berlin initiated the great controversy about Ibsen in Germany, newspapers and periodicals

were filled with it. On the one side stood the men of the old school who cried out against this declaration of war on all idealism, against the disgusting coarseness which must offend all sense of propriety in decent people, and against the socialistic spirit of revolt, to bring all of this into literature was to turn topsy turvy all standards of beauty. On the other side stood the younger generation who wished precisely that literature should take up all the contemporary problems and present life with unhesitant truth. Otto Brahm was the leader of the forces on this side, he sent out his article from *Deutsche Rundschau* in book form, and he wrote in *Die Nation*. His opponents taunted him with the little "Ibsen Gemeinde" which believed it could force upon Germany the stranger prophet. But Ludwig Fulda replied in *Die Nation* that this Gemeinde in truth was of the opinion that Ibsen was a distinguished exponent of the genuine Germanic spirit, because the ideas of the day found more vigorous expression in him than in any other author. Leo Berg published (in 1888) the small treatise *Henrik Ibsen und das Germanentum in der modernen Literatur*, with the purpose of showing how genuinely Germanic Ibsen was.

About New Year 1886-87 there were many who spoke to Ibsen regretfully about the police prohibition against *Ghosts*. He answered in the slow, reflective manner which he had acquired during his years in Germany. "The time has not yet come. But I know that the time will come. And I can wait. I can wait." Step by step he won his way forward. In 1887 both *The Wild Duck* and *Rosmersholm* appeared in two different German translations, Frau von Borch being one of the translators. An East Side theater in Berlin played *An Enemy of the People* in March,

1887, and kept it on the stage for two whole weeks. Felix Philippi and August Grosse had *Rosmersholm* performed in Augsburg, April 6, 1887, before it was seen even in Christiania and Copenhagen. Ibsen again came thither from Munich and was present at the last rehearsal. Horrified, he listened to and looked at the acting, shuddering at every word from the stage, boring all his ten fingers into the plush on the seat and moaning under his breath "O God, O God!" But all at once he straightened up and seemed to shake everything off, saying with determination "I will have to give up my intentions, and everything will go quite well." He understood that the actors could not so rapidly meet the new demands he made upon them, and he himself bowed to the conditions which naturally fall to a dramatist's lot. Quietly he sat watching the performance the next day, answered the call to the stage, expressed his thanks, and praised the actors.

A month later *Rosmersholm* appeared on the stage of the Residenz Theater in Berlin, again with Emanuel Reicher and Charlotte Frohn in two of the leading rôles. Again there was disagreement, some thought that the entire play was foolishness, others said that it was even worse than *Ghosts*. In reality, however, the "Ibsen Gemeinde" already had the upper hand, and the year 1888 brought the victory. The police ruling against *Ghosts* had to fall, in October it had been played freely in Switzerland (in Bern and Basel), and soon the Meiningen actors began to travel about with it in Germany and Austria. In March, 1888, *The Wild Duck* made a great success at the Residenz Theater in Berlin, and for Ibsen's sixtieth birthday the great actress Friederike Gossmann returned from private life to play Nora in Vienna. It was a glorious triumph.

Many German theaters would have arranged special performances for March 20, 1888, had not old Kaiser Wilhelm died a few days earlier. But practically every paper in Germany remembered Ibsen's birthday and printed articles about him. *The Feast at Solhoug* and *Emperor and Galilean* came out in German translations, the one with a preface by Julius Elias, the other with one by Otto Brahm.

For Ibsen, in Munich, the day proved to be festive in a wholly unexpected way. Letters, telegrams, and flowers poured in, so that he tripped about in his home quite confused, saying only "This is too much, this is too much!" German literary men and artists came to bring greetings, and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson expressed it all in his trenchant telegram: "Today the world comes to the lonely one."

Ibsen had at least won Germany. The detailed biography which Henrik Jæger published in Norwegian for his sixtieth birthday came out in German the following year, and from now on Ibsen was for at least twenty years master in the German theaters. Early in March, 1889, there was a whole "Ibsen Week" in Berlin, at which time he himself was present to receive the ovations, first for *The Lady from the Sea* which was played at the Royal Theater, then for *The Wild Duck*, at the Residenz Theater, and finally for *Nora*, at the Lessing Theater. From there he went to Weimar where he permitted himself to be celebrated and feted by both the Grand Duke and the people. He came as a triumphant.

He was still a leader in the battle of progress, and the air was still stormy about him. When Freie Bühne was opened in Berlin, September 29, 1889, it was almost self-evident that *Ghosts*

must be the opening play This new theater took up the war against censorship and official taste, with Ibsen in its banner It united radical art with social radicalism, naturalism with socialism After Ibsen came the young German writers, Gerhart Hauptmann (who was influenced for life by the presentation of *Ghosts* in 1887), Hermann Sudermann, and others But before Ibsen all must bow Even so late as in 1906, two months before he died, the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in Prussia sent out a ruling against buying the works of Ibsen for the normal schools But such things were only subsiding breakers after the storm The decisive battle had been fought in 1887-89, and from that time on the Germans regarded Ibsen as their own, as a German author

At the same time as Ibsen won his decisive victory in Germany, the battle about him was fought in England All the work that had been done earlier to make him known to English readers had accomplished little When Edmund Gosse in 1879 reprinted and expanded his old essay about Ibsen in the book *Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe*, he still dealt with the historical and poetic works. But here, as elsewhere, it was with his new social plays that Ibsen was destined to succeed, and it was the radicalism in these plays which induced Miss Henrietta Frances Lord to translate into English first *A Doll's House* (1882) and then *Ghosts* (1885) The last play she printed in a socialistic paper, but she was not successful with her translation, and won no considerable circle of readers for Ibsen It was not before 1888 that it was possible to arouse in Englishmen any great degree of interest in the new playwright The man who now took the lead in the work for Ibsen was the literary and

dramatic critic, William Archer, a Scotchman who had relatives in Norway, and who had learned Norwegian in his childhood. He had also met Ibsen in Rome in the winter of 1881 and later in Jutland in 1887.

It is characteristic of conditions in England that, although Archer had translated *Pillars of Society* into English as early as in 1880, he had not had the translation printed before 1888. In the beginning of the eighties there was a dull period in English intellectual life, certainly a period with a considerable amount of new growth, but a growth which was not yet much in evidence. In the latter part of the eighties, however, there was strain and upheaval in the community, a revolt with new demands and new ideas, and this proved to be just the time for the introduction of Henrik Ibsen. In 1888 there appeared in the stalls of the book dealer Walter Scott, in London, a volume containing three Ibsen plays, *Pillars of Society*, *Ghosts*, and *An Enemy of the People*, the first two translated by Archer, the third by Mrs. Eleanor Marx Aveling, a daughter of Karl Marx. This volume sold well in London, and a circle of Ibsen admirers could begin to gather there. They fought their first battle when the Novelty Theater was opened on June 7, 1889, with the presentation of *A Doll's House*, also translated by William Archer. It was the great Shakespeare actress Miss Janet Achurch who played Nora, and the performance went off exceptionally well. It was repeated successfully for many evenings afterwards. But the play awakened strife, it seemed altogether too revolutionary in its morality for the bourgeois English society to accept it upon its first appearance, and the papers were filled with the same moral commonplaces that had met the play in Scandinavia and

in Germany at the time it came out. Something similar happened when *Pillars of Society* was played a single time in July, 1889. It was the first Ibsen controversy in England, and it did not yet lead to victory. Miss Achurch traveled with *A Doll's House* to Australia and to America, but there it happened in some places that the play was hissed off the boards, and the papers dealt harshly and derisively with it.

By this time, however, Ibsen had won a place in the general thought and discussion in England, and Scott found it profitable to publish, in a collected edition of five volumes, all of Ibsen's prose works, from *The Vikings* to *Hedda Gabler*. They came out in the years 1890-91. William Archer superintended the translation and did most of it himself. His brother, Charles Archer, and his sister in law, Mrs. F. E. Archer, helped him. It was the first English translation to which Ibsen gave his approval, and it was also the first collection of his works that was published anywhere in the world. It is remarkable enough that one play, *The Lady from the Sea*, came out in two additional translations in the year 1890, the one by Mrs. Marx Aveling with an introduction by Edmund Gosse. At the same time the Norwegian biography by Henrik Jæger appeared in English, and when Gosse now sent out his *Northern Studies* in a new edition he had included a whole volume about the new Ibsen plays. All this gave the Ibsen lovers courage for a new advance.

While people like Gosse and Archer rejoiced chiefly in the dramatic art in his works, there were others who thought more of the revolutionary spirit in them. In July, 1890, George Bernard Shaw gave a lecture on "Socialism in Ibsen" before the Fabian Society, and it was the newspaper comment on this lec-

ture which caused Ibsen to send to an English paper a statement of what he thought about socialism. He was glad, he said, that he had in certain ways come to the same conclusion as "the social democratic moral philosophers," and he seemed to give a sort of sanction to the campaign of the radicals for him.

The year 1891 became the great controversial year. First, in February, *Rosmersholm* was produced at the Vaudeville Theater, and was met with disapproval and indignation by the London papers. Next *Ghosts* was to appear, but the censor forbade it. Then the theater owner J. T. Grein, a Dutchman by birth, played it, in spite of the censor, in one single performance at his Independent Theater, March 13, 1891. There was a storm of criticism in the papers. One could fill pages with a collection of only the worst abusive terms that were poured out upon the horrible play. It was called "abominable," "unspeakably disgusting," "an open sewer," "coarse, almost rotten impropriety," and so on, in the same style. The Ibsen admirers were described as people who itched to stir up all sorts of morbid and ugly sensuality. William Archer defended the author and the work in the press, and George Bernard Shaw expanded his lecture of the previous year to a book, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, in which he teased the opponents still more by explaining how decidedly Ibsen stood in opposition to all the old bourgeois "idealism."

Ibsen could hardly have wished for anything better than such a violent battle. He was talked about, ironic parodies of *Ghosts* were played at the revue theaters. *Hedda Gabler* was presented at the Vaudeville Theater and met with great success. Miss Elizabeth Robins produced the play there, and she herself

played Hedda Two years later, in January, 1893, even *Ghosts* could be brought out again at the Independent Theater The controversy was over, and one need no longer speak of "Ibsenism" ¹

The victory in England was, after all, not so great as in Germany Ibsen never had so deep a hold on his English audience as on the German, and he never held so great a place in the English theaters There was not in England so large a public which cared to see serious revolutionary ideas presented on the stage Single plays by him could occasionally attract crowds, but most of his plays were only for the few Some actors were delighted with the rôles he offered, and he compelled the playwrights to greater seriousness But he won no homestead right in England

Even less did he win it in France, where the controversy about him went on during the same years Just as in England it had largely been people from other lands—Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands—that led the struggle for Ibsen, so in France the strongest interest was taken by foreigners In *Revue d'art dramatique*, in the spring of 1887, Jacques Saint-Cere told about the mighty Ibsen controversy he had seen in Germany At the same time a member of the Russian diplomatic service was in Switzerland making the first translations of Ibsen into French This was Count Moritz Prozor, a Lithuanian whose mother tongue was German He had previously served in Stockholm, and there he had seen *Ghosts* (in 1883) He was so impressed that he later became an enthusiastic Ibsen lover He now saw the same play

¹ See information about Ibsen in England collected in his *Speeches and New Letters*, by Arne Kildal, Boston, 1910

in Switzerland, where the police interfered by making a ruling against it. He was familiar with the issue, and he wanted to try to strike a blow for Ibsen in France. Now he translated *Ghosts* and *A Doll's House* into French. The Swiss playwright, Edouard Rod, helped him find a publisher in Paris and wrote an appreciative preface about the Norwegian revolutionary dramatist. Thus the volume with the two plays came out in 1889.

It aroused no controversy, any more than the English volume of Ibsen had done the year before. But here and there the new style of drama attracted attention. Jules Lemaitre, the critic in *Journal des Debats*, wrote about it in his paper, and Émile Zola recognized a brother in arms in his battle. He spoke to the young actor André Antoine who two years earlier had organized his Théâtre Libre for the purpose of producing an art more true to life than that which predominated elsewhere in French theaters. He now took up *Ghosts*. He was not satisfied with Prozor's translation, and had a new one made with the assistance of a French business man who had been in Norway. The play was then presented for the first time, May 29, 1890. Antoine himself played Oswald, and he was excellent, filled with a quiet suffering which carried conviction. His fellow actors were not on the same level. Yet the play held the spectators, and thus Ibsen had won a place in France too. Controversy flared up around him. The old kind "uncle" Francisque Sarcey made himself spokesman for the old bourgeois taste and would have nothing of explosives like the Ibsenesque drama, in the name of "sound sense" and "French joy of life" he turned against the revolutionary grimness of this foreigner. It was from

the very first a common controversial statement in France that Ibsen was obscure and enigmatic *Ghosts* ended in uncertainty, and it seemed so much in conflict with French logic that Ibsen must needs be rejected because he was "un French"—a stranger, not only in race but in mind. Jules Lemaitre became more and more nationalistic and conservative, and he too began to think that Ibsen did not fall in with the French spirit. In the middle of the nineties Sarcey was of the opinion that he could declare Ibsen to be dead in France.

This, however, was a mistake. The seed was sown, and here and there it began to sprout. A Belgian, Charles Sarolea, published in 1891 a little book about Ibsen, written with youthful enthusiasm. Of greater weight and seriousness was the large book by Auguste Ehrhard, *Henrik Ibsen et le Theatre contemporain*, of 1892, and immediately after, in 1893, the Swiss writer Ernest Tissot appeared with a book about both Bjørnson and Ibsen, *Le drame norvégien*. As a matter of fact, he had not much spiritual sympathy with Ibsen, even though he placed his art high.

Such writings belonged to the campaign which was to give Frenchmen an understanding of Ibsen, but the main thing was to bring them into contact with the dramatist himself. Prozor went on energetically with the work of translation, and his publisher in Paris, Albert Savine, gave him faithful aid. In the years 1892-93 he published six new volumes of *Theatre d'Henrik Ibsen*, with ten dramas in French translation by Prozor and others, and he had occasion to reprint them time and again. Antoine played *Ghosts* here and there in France, altogether perhaps two hundred times, and he produced *The Wild Duck* at

Théâtre Libre in April, 1891. In December of the same year *Hedda Gabler* appeared at the Vaudeville Theater, and in December, 1892, the theatrical association Les Escholiers played *The Lady from the Sea*. After 1893 Lugné Poe made Ibsen a regular part of the repertoire in his free theater, L'Œuvre, beginning with *Rosmersholm* and *An Enemy of the People*, and later taking up one play after the other.

This may have been both good and bad. As Prozor became the authorized French translator of Ibsen, Lugné Poe secured the monopoly of the stage production in France. But Lugné had not the acting ability to match his intentions, he could not adapt himself to the rôles with fresh and supple imagination, but tended to be somewhat dry and monotonous on the stage. His faithfulness toward the task he had undertaken was a power nevertheless. It was due to him that Ibsen was not forgotten in France, and he did not exclude others. The greatest triumph was Gabrielle Réjane's playing of Nora at the Vaudeville Theater in April, 1894. Here was a great Ibsen rôle, recreated by a great actress, and everyone had to yield. All who wanted to be abreast with the new currents must now know Ibsen.

He never came to be popular with the general theater-going public in France. Edouard Rod had already in 1889 pointed out that it required effort and adaptability to penetrate into Ibsen, and Frenchmen were on the whole too closely bound to their own established theatrical standards. In some degree, furthermore, the translations of Prozor were a hindrance. It was not to be expected that he, a foreigner, should be able to write a French style as vivid and trenchant as Ibsen must require. Ibsen himself was so happy to be translated into French that he willingly gave

Prozor both authorization and monopoly. When anyone asked him what he thought about the translations, he merely answered that all translations were equally good and equally bad—it was not possible to transfer the original thought whole and undistorted into a foreign language. Yet the work which one German critic after another did in revising and polishing the German translations showed how far it was possible to go in finding a satisfactory form in a foreign language. Neither in England nor in France did they ever succeed equally well. Archer tried too hard to follow the original text, not being poet enough to let himself go, and Prozor was still less a poet. That which had the greatest effect both in France and England was the production at the theaters, when good actors gave life to Ibsen's characters.

The controversy which had greeted the Ibsen dramas the first time they were presented died away little by little. It was nowhere else so general, so deep going, and so bitter as it had been in Germany, England, and France in the years about 1890. Almost everywhere it happened occasionally that opposition and aversion were aroused when a play was new, but in one country after another Ibsen became a writer whom everyone knew, and whom many loved. Everywhere he had friends who could create an understanding for him.

Strangely enough, his plays seemed to change with the years. It is a characteristic of all great literature that it acquires a new meaning for new people and new generations, and the Ibsen plays went through the same growth as he himself did. The spirit of revolt in them died away, the questions they had

raised fell away from them, because people and circumstances became different

Where people were still in revolt, still in the midst of the struggle for freedom and the right to live, his works could yet for a long time arouse courage and hope—as for instance in all the peoples who lived under the rule of the Russian Czar. Here, in various places, translations were printed in secret editions which could be circulated only at great risk. But wherever people had progressed at least an appreciable distance on the way to the intellectual freedom which was Ibsen's fundamental demand, other things in his plays attained value.

It was almost a change of nature that took place, and the thing which remained, which more and more captured people's interest, was the soul portrayal, the deep soul struggle that surged through the plays. A work like *Pillars of Society* lost ground, it had not penetrated with such power into suffering and struggling human souls. But *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, and the next few plays became true dramas of the soul which could hold one generation after another.

It is not the purpose of this book to relate the many-sided story of how Ibsen's dramatic works won their way forward all over the world and made him the great world dramatist. It has but been a part of his biography to show how his plays created strife, how the strife became victory, and how the victory changed its meaning.

Throughout the nineties his plays were translated into one foreign language after the other, and they were played wherever theaters were found, in all parts of the world. Great actors from

England and America, Germany and France, traveled far out into the world with the rôles he had created. Perhaps no one achieved such universal victory for him as the Italian actress Eleonora Duse. Even from the beginning of the nineties she brought Europe and America to their knees before her own and Ibsen's creative art, first with Nora, later with Rebecca West and Hedda Gabler. She had a tragic power and a marvelous soul intuition which always made Ibsen new. He could not have found a better interpreter of his profoundest thoughts.

THE HOME-COMING

IBSEN saw with joy how his plays won recognition all over the world, but he never took part in the controversies about them. While he was always willing to step forward and receive the ovations that were offered him, he never revealed his innermost self. Often he would say that he did not care for all the victories he won, and that he felt no happiness in having achieved world fame, it was not for that he had written, but because he must "realize himself." Nevertheless, it did his heart good when his works met with intimate understanding, but he would wait quietly for the understanding to come, and if anyone complained that it was slow, he would answer dryly that he counted on ten years to pass after the appearance of any play before it could be fully understood.

When *Hedda Gabler* came out, for Christmas, 1890, it was given the same reception as *The Lady from the Sea*. People began to wonder and ask what it was he wanted now, what he meant with his new play, and finding neither the problem nor the purpose, they classed Hedda with his "incomprehensible" women characters. Especially from Germany do we hear this, although he was just at this time celebrated and praised in Germany as never before.

The Royal Theater in Munich was the first in the world to present *Hedda Gabler* on the stage (January 31, 1891). Ibsen

was not satisfied with the actress who played the leading rôle, she did not speak in a straightforward and natural manner, but declaimed, so that it was clearly evident she had not understood the part. He said nothing, however, and the play was greeted with great applause, although there were some who hissed. The applause was in reality given to the author rather than to the play. A few days later he was in Berlin, and received an ovation when *Hedda Gabler* was played at the Lessing Theater (February 10). This was not a really adequate presentation, either, and again the applause was less for the play than for the general program in art of which Ibsen was the great leader.

Two months later, April 11, he was in Vienna, where *The Pretenders* was shown for the first time at the Burg Theater. Delegations of women brought thanks to the great advocate of women's rights, and he was elected an honorary member of "Verein für erweiterte Frauenbildung." His visit gave the impetus to forming in Vienna, too, a Freie Bühne, an association for modern literature, that is, for the literature with a purpose and the naturalistic theatrical art of which Ibsen was considered the master. There, too, he was chosen as honorary member. On the evening of the performance itself the young literary Vienna had a celebration for him, he was greeted as the greatest living dramatist, and also as a politician. He had not had opportunity to prepare a speech in reply, and he managed to utter only some commonplaces about how this festive hour must bear fruit in his work.

The speaker for the occasion in Vienna had said that now Ibsen had won a homestead right for himself there too, and indeed he might well feel at home wherever he went in Germany. His

plays, both the old and the new, were played everywhere *The Pretenders* made a great success at the Royal Theater in Berlin late in May, he was himself present when *The Vikings* was taken up anew at the Residenz Theater in Munich late in June. No German writer held such a place in the German theaters as he. He was actually fashionable, and some people thought there might be too much of a good thing. In May, 1891, *Der Zeitgeist* in Berlin had a long satiric poem called "The Song about Ibsen."

*Ibsen, Ibsen überall!
Da geht nichts mehr drüber!
Auf dem ganzen Erdenball
Herrscht das Ibsen-Fieber!
Alle Welt wird Ibsen-toll,
Wenn auch wider Willen,
Denn die ganze Luft ist voll
Ibsen-Ruhm Bacillen!
Keine Rettung! Ueberall
Kunden Ibsens Namen,
Pressend mit Posaunenschall,
Moden und Reklamen
Auf Cigarren, Damenschmuck,
Torten, Miedern, Schlipsen,
Prangt das Wort in goldnem Druck
Ibsen! A la Ibsen!*

In five more long stanzas the poem described how one met the name of Ibsen on every hand. But did this truly mean that people understood Ibsen as he himself wished to be understood? He must admit in his own mind that the author they celebrated was the fighter, the reckless revolutionist, while he himself more

and more emphasized that he was a portrayer of human beings, a searcher of souls. Could it be that he was really less and less at home in Germany the greater the victories he won?

In the spring of 1891 it happened that he took part in a celebration which the journalists' and authors' association of Munich held on the seventieth birthday of the Prince Regent (March 12). Somewhat late in the banquet, when the wine had loosened the tongues, the poet and dramatist Martin Greif arose to speak. He was an enthusiastic nationalist, and made an attack upon the foreign dramatists who superseded the native writers, with a sharp side-thrust at Ibsen. A little later Ibsen tapped on his glass and asked for the floor. This happened so rarely that every one was apprehensive. He smiled pleasantly, but a wicked gleam played in his eye. He praised the hospitable city of Munich which gave recognition to every artistic ability, native and foreign, and he believed that the city gained by it, for it was famed for this fact throughout the world. Just why Martin Greif should turn against the foreign dramatists, was hard to understand, for everyone knew that Greif was in the main a lyricist and not a dramatist. Not that Ibsen took his attack to heart, for he did not feel that he was a foreign dramatist in Munich, he was played at least as often and was given at least as much applause as Martin Greif, and he would gladly share his laurels in brotherly fashion with Greif. Thereupon he sat down. Many laughed, but all understood that Ibsen had been angry. The chairman, Dr. M. G. Conrad, attempted to smooth out the difference, and he succeeded in making Ibsen and Greif shake hands, but there were still mutterings from Ibsen.

He was somewhat unsteady on his feet when he left the ban-

quiet, and he leaned heavily on the arm of Dr. Conrad, who accompanied him home. But his brain was at work, and he abused Martin Greif all the way. "What does he want, anyway, this Martin Greif? I can't understand it. What dramas does he write? Dramas about people who are dead long ago, people whom he has never known! Can one write dramas about people he does not know? What do the dead matter to Martin Greif? He should let them lie in peace, and dramatize the living as much as he pleases. Now he disturbs the peace of the deceased princes of Bavaria in their graves. When he has finished with them, he will presumably begin with the Hohenzollerns. Indeed there are enough dead kings. History is wide. But that is no subject for dramatic writing now." Conrad reminded him that he had himself begun with the drama of *Catiline*. "Well," answered Ibsen, "in the first place Catiline was not a king but an anarchist, and in the second place I was at that time not a dramatist but an apothecary. *Catiline* was the first dramatic attempt of the apothecary. Has Martin Greif ever been an apothecary? Well, what then?" To this there was no answer, and besides Ibsen had now reached his home. But it is clear that there remained a sting in his soul, it was a question that ached: was he at home in Munich, or was he a stranger there?

About a week after he had seen *The Vikings* presented at the Royal Theater in Munich, he left the city, never to return. He moved home to Norway.

Why did he move? To this question he has never given any satisfactory answer. To Georg Brandes he once said that it was more convenient for him to live in his homeland in order to manage the fortune which he had now accumulated by his plays. But

his income came chiefly from Germany and Denmark, and this question of money was in reality of no consequence

Fru Ibsen believed, she once said, that he moved to Norway because he wanted to die at home, and it is possible that such a feeling may have stirred deep in his heart, even if he would not admit it, perhaps not even to himself. During his last visit home he had not been well, and he had then talked of settling in Norway. At the beginning of 1890 he had a severe attack of influenza, and it may have reminded him that he was no longer young.

Herman Bang has told about Ibsen's attendance at a lecture on Guy de Maupassant which Bang gave a few months after Ibsen had come back to Norway. Ibsen sat in the first row of seats, and stared uninterruptedly down into the high hat which he held in his hands. He had come because he was invited, but he seemed not to listen, until Bang began to speak of Maupassant's idea of death, represented by the insufferable blowfly which buzzed and buzzed around the imprisoned person. Then Bang felt Ibsen's eyes fastened upon him, as he had never before felt eyes, he seemed to see again before him a giant lion in a zoological garden who gazed into the night with a look of unspeakable sorrow. In a flash Bang understood that Ibsen himself had looked into the face of Death.

The thought of death creates homesickness, and in Ibsen this took the form of a longing for the sea. The endless, eternally surging sea seemed to give an answer to his own restless heart. When in the early part of July, 1891, he set out northward from Munich, he said that he wanted to stop for two weeks at the Sound to enjoy the freshness of the sea. But from there he would go to Norway—that was the object of his journey. As a matter

of fact, he did not stop at the Sound at all, but went directly to Norway, arriving in Oslo on July 16. The first thing he did there was to put into action a dream which he had cherished for twenty years: he made a sea trip to the North Cape. He did not take the trouble to climb up the Cape itself, he stayed on board the ship. It was the sea he wanted to draw in with deep breaths. When he returned from there, August 7, he settled in Oslo for the rest of his life.

Now the truth is that he did not at all come to Norway with the thought of remaining there. It was only little by little that he made up his mind to do so. Originally he had thought of going back to Munich before the winter. While he was on the trip to the North Cape, he decided to stay in Oslo through the winter, and when he had once taken lodgings there, he remained permanently. His moving home was thus not a deliberate plan, at least not clearly and definitely thought out in his mind, but when he had reached home, he felt bound.

One of the ties that bound him most strongly was perhaps his son Sigurd Ibsen had been in the Swedish Norwegian foreign service since 1885, but in 1889 he had left the service because the Swedish government did not offer the young Norwegian enough opportunity for advancement. Just at this time the whole question of foreign representation began to create difficulties between Norway and Sweden. Sigurd Ibsen came home and threw himself into the battle for the strongest Norwegian demands, and he wrote so clearly and effectively, with so free an outlook, that the party of the Left in Norway greeted him with joyous hopes. This was in 1891, and Sigurd Ibsen now saw his future in Norway, as a leader in Norwegian politics. He estab-

lished personal relations and cooperation with the foremost men in the national struggle, and he was already pointed out as the first Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

His mother was herself so Norwegian and so deeply attached to her son that she followed his career with heartfelt interest. The father did not care so much about politics, but was genuinely glad to see how his son rose in esteem and influence. It drew him more closely into Norwegian circles.

Ibsen himself said later that he thought conditions at home had changed much, so that living there, which had formerly seemed impossible to him, now came easily and naturally. In fact he was still the center of opposite elements, here, as in Germany, he was first and foremost the author of the radicals, and the fact that he was the father of Sigurd Ibsen bound him still more closely to that side.

On the day he came to Oslo by steamboat from Copenhagen, there were reporters from the liberal papers, *Verdens Gang* and *Dagbladet*, to meet him at the pier. *Dagbladet* wished him welcome in the name of "all liberal Norwegian women and men," and in *Dagbladet* appeared all the daily small notices of what he occupied himself with.

Yet many of the conservatives wanted to claim him too. He had now become the most famous of all Norwegians—only Edvard Grieg could compare with him in this respect—and all his countrymen grew by his honors. Besides he never interfered in matters of party strife at home, and his nearest personal friends were of the party of the Right. There was even one conservative paper, *Aftenposten*, which openly urged him to remain in Norway. The paper was forced to reiterate its disagreement with

him, but it could not help showing its hand and revealing that it needed him against Bjornson. The article appeared in the issue for July 17, 1891, and read as follows:

"Our great, celebrated dramatist is visiting his fatherland these days, after several years' absence.

"This time, again, his stay will be very short, but we want to express the wish that it may be long enough to permit him to understand that his countrymen, too, know how to value the fame he has won for himself by his distinguished works, and the glory he has thereby reflected upon his homeland.

"As our readers know, we do not share Ibsen's view of human life or of social conditions, but we are well able to see and admire the mighty poetic genius which the country has fostered in him, and we wish that Herr Ibsen might be able to emancipate himself from the bitter feelings that for so long a time have caused him to prefer other countries to his fatherland, for, when all is said and done, it is from the intellectual soil of his homeland that Henrik Ibsen has drawn his best power, and if he could decide to establish his residence among his countrymen, his sharp pen and his keen critical sense would soon find enough things to turn against here, where plebeianism still lies in deep layers over the field of intellectual life, and where superficiality and dilettanteism hold sway, under the ægis of Bjørnson."

There arose a sort of competition about appropriating Ibsen, and in fact he liked both sides, the dual nature of his work and temperament was clearly brought out.

Georg Brandes was in Norway that summer and lived for a while at the same hotel with Ibsen in Oslo, and the two were now perfect friends again. A week after Ibsen had returned from

ence that they played with even more life and fire than usual. The author was greeted with thunderous applause as soon as he appeared, the applause was directed toward him after each act, and at the end there was a storm of hurrahs. "All Christiania" gave him its welcome.

About two weeks after that again, on September 14, there was a new festal presentation in the Christiania Theater. *The League of Youth* was being played for the hundredth time. No other Ibsen play had ever attained to this. Resplendent with decorations, Ibsen sat in the middle of the parquet, among the finest people of the city, and again there was the same applause as formerly. Ibsen stood in his place and bowed his thanks, but did not accede to the request that he come to the stage. After the performance there was a festivity in the Tivoli restaurant, with a speech of praise by the theater director, Schröder, and a reply of thanks by Ibsen. He urged the building of a new theater, and he believed that now the conditions were ripe for such an undertaking. He had acquired faith in the artistic interests of the city.

If this evening had borne the appearance of an ovation to the conservative author, it was the revolutionist who was honored a few days later, September 17, at the Tivoli Theater, where August Lindberg and his Swedish company played *Ghosts*—the drama which the Christiania Theater had turned down. Here youth and radicalism met. Here the hurrahs for Ibsen sounded like trumpet calls to battle, and the fact that he here stepped out on the stage and thanked them was regarded as an endorsement. After all, then, he was still a radical.

Party strife was still so sharp that many conservative people

would have nothing to do with Ibsen. His relation with the old "Hollander" friends was broken. He later remembered his "Hollander" days with a sigh and a smile. "Good Lord, that was the time when even Ludvig Ludvigsen Daae could speak to me." It was generally said that Ibsen had used Professor Daae as his model for Rector Kroll in *Rosmersholm*. This was not true. Daae was not such a dry whittled stick, even though he had fanaticism enough, but Daae had heard it, and he made no secret of the fact that he considered Ibsen a danger to the community—one from whom it was well to stay as far away as possible.

That adherents of conservative principles did in certain ways take advantage of Ibsen, was shown when the conservative poet, Kristofer Randers, about at this time dedicated a collection of controversial poems to "Henrik Ibsen, the poet of individualism, in deep gratitude for what he has taught me to write verse and to despise the masses."

Ibsen himself stated his program as an author when, late in August, he wrote in the autograph album of the Swedish singer, Sigrd Arnoldson: "I believe that we two agree when I say that our object is not to celebrate triumphs, but to ennoble human hearts by impressions of beauty and interpretation of truth." Now, as formerly, he wished to stand outside the parties, and even more than formerly he wished to be purely the artist.

In truth, he was soon enough given a reminder that a new element was working its way forward, one which—perhaps—would thrust him aside. One of the first days in October he received from Knut Hamsun free tickets to two lectures on "Norwegian Literature," which the young author wanted to give

in Oslo The previous year Hamsun had published the remarkable book which led Norwegian literature into a new era The book was *Hunger* It was with the appearance of this book that the new generation of Norwegian authors took their departure in earnest from realism and writing with a purpose, and instead plunged into soul study, seeking to grasp all that was deepest, most subconscious, and wordless in the life of the mind In the fall of 1891 Hamsun lectured about the new theory of literature in various Norwegian cities, in Bergen, Stavanger, and other places, and he now came to Oslo Before him went the report of how roughly and sarcastically he had handled the older writers, especially those whom people at that time used to call the "four great authors"—Ibsen, Bjornson, Lie, and Kielland

There was suspense in the air, and the suspense increased when Ibsen appeared at the first lecture and sat down in seat number one in the first row Hamsun was not to be daunted "I am going to find fault vigorously tonight," he began, "find fault so that people will probably be both astonished and offended" Then he went on to condemn all the "great" Norwegian literary production because it had no interest in psychological penetration, because it was naively blunt and unsophisticated in its portrayal of types, and sought only what was utilitarian in a popular sense, as befitted a democracy of peasants He went through several works, first by Ibsen, then by the other great writers, and tried to show how they allowed great areas of the soul to lie unexplored and unknown

Ibsen sat quiet and serious, with unmoved countenance, and listened, his strong blue eyes did not leave the speaker for a minute Two days later the next lecture was given, and then

the hall was crowded with people, many were curious to see the meeting between the old and the young author Ibsen came again, and listened once more to Hamsun's condemnation of himself and the others

He said nothing about what he thought, but there was a smile in his eyes He was amused at Hamsun's audacity, and he was not afraid of the new element which announced itself On his last visit to Norway he had promised that he would always stand with the young people. At that time it was a matter of fighting Now that the young authors sought other ways, away from strife, into the life of the soul, Ibsen could again accompany them He knew within himself that here, too, he had helped to break the new paths The very strife itself had helped him find his way down to "the secret heart chamber," whither he had longed to go ever since his youth No one had foretold the new soul searching more clearly than he He could feel in sympathy—not in conflict—with the young author who called for soul searching and slashed away at himself He could not become a stranger in Norway if this program were to win out

Even before the month of September was ended, he had arranged to remain in Norway, and in the days following the lectures of Hamsun he moved into his new home He had rented quarters in the elegant new row of buildings on Victoria Terrasse, and he took pleasure in managing personally the furnishing of his house Half a year later he wrote to his publisher, saying "I have furnished for myself a workroom which, according to my taste, is very pretty, comfortable, and convenient, where I can be entirely undisturbed This I could not be in Munich, and therefore I often felt myself hampered in my work down there"

He actually came to feel happy in Oslo. The climate suited him, and he found good working conditions. He felt himself welcomed among his countrymen, and it seemed to him that the intellectual atmosphere in the country had become lighter and freer, so that his work could steer a bolder flight.

In January, 1892, when a bookseller in Oslo donated some of his books to an artists' fair, Ibsen wrote on the flyleaf of *Gaule* two verses which, in the form of a question, gave a reply to the homesick poem "Burnt Ships" of twenty years earlier:

*From the sunwarmed lowland
Each night that betides,
To the huts of the snow-land
A horseman rides*

*Of late he dismounted,
Found open each door—
Could on this he have counted
Had he come home before?*

It was something of a delusion when society and intellectual life in Norway seemed to him so much ampler now than they had been only six years ago. Obviously, the battle which he and so many other Norwegian writers, together with the scientists and journalists, had fought for so many years, had left deep marks in the Norwegian people. There prevailed a freer thought in wider circles now than when he last lived at home, thirty years earlier. But it was equally certain that new ideas—here as everywhere in the world—met with stubborn opposition when they tried to break their way, and there was all too much in the

community of Norway that might have struck the "sharp critical sense" which *Aftenposten* had bidden him make use of when he came home. If his writing now was no longer so critical of society, or so filled with strife as it had once been, it was not primarily because social conditions had been materially altered, but because he himself was another man. It was his own love of battle which was gone. His desire was no longer to expose the lies in social morality, but to test himself and to study human souls. That is why he could now live and be happy at home.

In the summer of 1892, when the political advance had led to so sharp a conflict that it threatened to break up both the Constitution and the Union with Sweden, Ibsen wrote in a letter "Personally, I do not take part in the controversies, to do so would be contrary to my nature. And this attitude on my part is respected up here. Since my return last year I am in the happy position of knowing within myself and of experiencing daily that I have both the party of the Right and the party of the Left with me. I can therefore work with an undisturbed mind."

In Oslo he led the same well regulated life to which he had accustomed himself abroad. In the forenoon and afternoon he had his regular working hours at his writing table. Every day, at the same hour, about noon, he came down Carl Johan Street in frock coat and silk hat, walking with careful, short steps, and took his regular place in the cafe at Grand Hotel, there he enjoyed his morning drink and read the papers, and at the regular time he went home again. He came to belong to the life of the Street, and everyone stepped respectfully aside for him.

When he had lived for four years at Victoria Terrasse, he



IBSEN ON HIS DAILY WALK DOWN
CARL JOHAN STRAET IN OSLO

moved and secured new and larger living quarters at Drammensveien with a view toward the Palace Gardens. He had less sunlight there than he had before, his workroom faced the north. But King Oscar kindly gave him the key to the closed bit of park known as the Queen's Park, and in the new house he had at least a large and elegant room for work. There he hung a portrait of Strindberg which Chr. Krohg had painted—not because he liked Strindberg, but because the portrait had such “devilish eyes,” and he found amusement in looking at them. Indeed, he had first thought of having the portrait hung so that only the eyes were visible. It was one of the things which gave zest to his existence. In Oslo he lived somewhat quietly, but he did not entirely cut himself off from social life, and he moved among both conservatives and liberals, but most among conservatives. He attended regularly the meetings of the lecture society, “Andvake,” which Lorentz Dietrichson had recently organized, and there, too, he sought mostly the company of the conservatives. When in 1896 he was elected a member of the Christiania Society of Arts and Sciences, he often went to meetings there too, but he soon stopped doing so, as his son did not obtain a teaching chair at the University, which was at that time under consideration, and Ibsen thought that the permanent secretary of the Society, Professor Gustav Storm, was mainly responsible for the outcome.

He did not grow more talkative than he had been the last years before he came home, and he did not reveal much of himself to his acquaintances. He maintained his dignity, and he adhered to the formalities. Not only with regard to himself, however, he considered it his duty to fulfill the formalities with

regard to others, and he did not fail to show his sympathy when an acquaintance met with sorrow or sickness. Then the kindness of his heart was revealed underneath the forms. It was remarkable how he could make friends with children. There he felt that he had nothing to fear, he could be free and open. He often chatted with the children in the public school close to his home, Ruslökka, and he had them race for small coins which he threw out among them. He laughed most heartily as he watched the sport. The children of his friends he often remembered with gifts and all sorts of trifles which children like, thus he found an outlet for his craving for affection.

Even more than formerly his life lay in his writing, but it became a more and more insistent question to him, whether he could be satisfied with this life of the imagination.

Chapter Eighteen

TESTING OF LIFE

THROUGH all of Ibsen's career, from the time he had found his true self, there had run a mighty surge of longing for life, a burning desire to be in the midst of its storms and breakers, to feel the heat of battle and of love. In youth he had striven to create "literature", but it had never been able to fill his breast with the joy and happiness that a man experiences in feeling his strength strained to the utmost. We meet this shattering conflict between his desire for life and the demands of his art in the two series of poems, "In the Picture Gallery" and "On the Fells," written when he was in his early thirties. Even in *Love's Comedy* the conflict and tumult in his soul had not yet quieted down to a clear and strong decision.

In *Brand* his craving for life broke forth with volcanic power. The whole poem is a single cry for action and life, a demand for seriousness and truth in all the conduct of life. It may seem fearfully stern and harsh at first, but it ends on a note of longing for a life which should harmonize seriousness with joy, the call of duty with love.

*You with youth and freshness, follow,
Let a life breath blow you free
From the dust of this dark hollow!*

He ridiculed the "abominable poet," Peer Gynt, who dared not take upon himself the responsibility of life or obey its call.

It was this, too, that made the young Julian so discouraged and tired of learning, that whenever there was a cry in him for light on the path of life, he was always given "the same despairing answer" Books, books, books! "I cannot use books, it is for life that I hunger—communion, face to face, with the spirit"

With holy indignation Ibsen had thrown himself into the battle of life, had sounded the storm signal for revolt against all the lies with which society and the individual covered their paltriness For each book that he sent out, he could see how his blows stung, and he could see that his writing was a vital power

But each time he had completed a new book, the feeling came over him that now he had again produced literature, not deeds So long as he felt the strength of youth within him, so long as the power to grow indignant still burned vigorous and hot in him, it was the joy of battle that was uppermost in his mind But as he grew older, it seemed as if life and battle became more and more remote Not long after *Brand*, he had been able to find the slender plank which was sufficient to rescue even that fugitive from life, Peer Gynt, from the great shipwreck After the bold attacks upon the lies of society, from *Pillars of Society* to *An Enemy of the People*, he could even plead for mercy on the life lie in such a wretch as Hjalmar Ekdal

Deeper and deeper into the soul he probed with his question, and he began to ponder on what inner powers killed the will to action and the desire for life in people The quiet dreamer Rosmer longed to take his part in the struggle of life—he felt that there could be no happiness for him otherwise

Yet he was not able to throw off the burden of the past, the painful sense of guilt that weighed on his conscience and sapped his courage. Time and again, from *The League of Youth* to *Ghosts*, Ibsen had set it up as the fundamental condition of life that a man must have a purpose to live for, a battle to fight, and it was Hedda Gabler's tragedy that she knew not the least thing that was worth living for. She had not courage to follow the longing for life which burned within her, and when she finally, one single time, almost furtively, tried to "mould a human destiny"—when the pent up life impulse broke loose and wanted to take revenge for suppression and longing—then she broke helplessly under the responsibility. Life avenged itself on her who had wanted to deny it.

Ever since he worked on *Brand*, it had been clear to Ibsen that he must choose either he must write or go to war. He had chosen to write, chosen it because he could not choose other wise, the life of the imagination had always been the strongest, the true life to him. He had deluded himself with the thought that writing was also a way of going to war, but the protest burned constantly within him, and helped to create drama upon drama. Incessantly he circled about this question: life or poetry? In *Hedda Gabler* the drama itself centered on this courage or lack of courage to live. The question became the fundamental subject in all that he wrote after he came back to Norway.

He had material for a new drama in mind even before he left Germany. When he was in Berlin in February, 1891, and saw *Hedda Gabler*, he told a German friend, Julius Elias, about the "devilry" he now intended to write. He sat laughing quietly by himself, quite as when in boyhood days he drew

the face on his sister's doll, and he told about the young Austrian lady in whose company he had spent so much time in Gossensass two years earlier. She had appeared to him as coming out of fairyland, and he had called her "the princess." But sometimes chills had run through him, for he seemed to see a beast of prey or a troll behind the fair exterior. She had said that a woman of our day did not long for marriage in the same way as women did formerly, the thing that attracted her was only taking the man away from another woman—the capture itself, not love. Now he had gradually penetrated into her soul, and now the drama was to be about her—it would be "interesting, unusually interesting."

During the last years he lived in Munich he constantly brought the conversation around to the subject of hypnotism, and how one human being could gain power over the mind of another. He had dealt with the same question while he worked on *The Lady from the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*, and yet it had not loosened its hold on him. On the contrary—this was something mysterious that attracted him more and more strongly. It happened in these years that a husband and wife—total strangers to him—came and asked his advice, the woman believed that another woman had hypnotized her husband. Such things caught Ibsen's imagination, and he inquired and searched among his acquaintances to find if anyone had met with anything similar. He held that even the healthiest and strongest person could not escape spiritual compulsion, and he told of how he himself had often felt unreasonable thoughts arising in him as if caused by compulsion. He became quite

excited on one occasion when, just for fun, some attempts at hypnotism were made in his presence

While he was pondering all this, however, and forming the new beast of prey woman, his thoughts gradually shifted ground. More and more they centered in the man whom she wanted to take, and he began to probe into his own soul, into his own life problem. When in 1892 he had at last come so far that the new drama actually began to take form in his mind, he wrote two short stanzas which he later called an "introduction to the mood" of the play. The verses dealt with old people who lost their life happiness.

They sat there, those two, in a cozy nest

In autumn and winter weather

But the house burned down, and in hopeless quest

They search the ashes together

But in all that they can find in the ashes, there is nothing on which they can build a new life.

Never she finds her burnt-out faith,

He never his joy that perished

The dramatic, the tragic thing to him was the hopeless struggle in an old man who stands between burned dreams and a new life. This became the drama of *The Master Builder*.

Once, just before he moved away from Munich, someone chanced to tell a legend about the architect of St. Michael's Church in that city. He had become so apprehensive lest the mighty church dome he had erected should not hold, that he had leaped from the tower. Ibsen sat listening to this, and then said "That legend must have come from the North, at least

I think we have many of the same kind at home" The Germans answered that in Germany almost every famous cathedral had such a legend about the architect "Do you know why?" asked Ibsen No, no one knew Then he sat silent for a while and only stared before him "People," he said, "have the true instinct that no one can with impunity build so high" With these words he turned away

The nemesis idea was strong in him, he knew that retribution came upon him who had once been moved by pride and had seen only his own will, and he could easily feel that he himself was such an architect It happened once in Oslo that Erik Werenskiöld met him in the street as he went along looking attentively at some new buildings "You are interested in architecture?" said Werenskiöld "Yes, it is, as you know, my own trade," answered Ibsen He looked upon his own books as works of architecture

Therefore something strongly personal came into *The Master Builder* He gave to this architect the same weakness which troubled himself so much, and more and more as he grew older, that he dared not look down into deep chasms or from great heights But this was only a symbol of the dizziness of mind which came upon him when he gazed down into the depths of life, down into his own soul

Solness carried about with him a sick conscience, even as Rosmer had done He had built his success on the fire which had destroyed his wife's childhood home and taken her children away from her, and he could not free himself from the memory of how he himself had secretly wished that the fire might break out The "devils" within him had gained the upper hand, and

he could never again feel guiltless and "happy. Once, in the audacity of youth, he had dared and accomplished "the impossible," but he did not dare it again.

Then the younger generation came and demanded that he should give way to them. They wanted to get ahead and to push him aside, just as Knut Hamsun had wished to do with Ibsen. But Solness clung and struggled against them—until the younger generation knocked at his own door and wanted to wake new courage in him. It was "the princess" who urged him on, and he began to dream of new life and new love. But—he became dizzy, and fell. It was impossible to do the deeds of youth anew.

There was much of his own experience in this play, undoubtedly he portrayed himself in Solness and his problem. "He is a man who is somewhat related to me," he admitted publicly in a speech a few years later. But it is remarkable how the young woman in the play had been changed from the original model. Fraulein Emilie Bardach of Vienna had become the Norwegian mountain girl, Hilda. It would seem that Ibsen wanted to prove that she had her origin in older thoughts of his, when he gave her the name of the youngest daughter in *The Lady from the Sea*. In so doing he traced her back to the young girl whom he had seen awaken to life at the time he laid his plans for *Rosmersholm*, and even further, for in reality she was descended from the courageous young Dina Dorf in *Pillars of Society*, who wanted to win the man she loved in complete freedom, without any promise, without any regard for prevailing conventions. Therefore Hilda became so thoroughly Norwegian, not refined as a lady from Vienna, but wild and

strong as Norwegian mountain nature, as a viking woman like Hjordis, with aggressive courage like a ski girl from the youngest Oslo Nor have I ever seen anyone play Hilda more adequately than Johanne Dybwad did in the Christiania Theater

In *The Master Builder* Ibsen included many of the psychological questions which had occupied his thoughts during the last year. It had much to do with secret powers in people, with unexpressed wishes which translated themselves into deeds, with subconscious thoughts which lived independently, with the power of one soul over another. Hilda gained power over Solness, Solness had power over Kaja Fosli. Ibsen certainly meant some kind of hypnotism by this, it was with his approval that Johan Fahlström at the Christiania Theater played Solness with gestures like those of a hypnotist.

The main emphasis, however, was not there. The tragedy of the play was the conflict within the master builder himself—the conflict between his suppressed longing for a strong and free expansion of life and the sore feeling of guilt which held him in its grip. He had a "corpse" to carry, even as Johannes Rosmer had. What the dead Beata was to Rosmer, the living Aline was to Solness. For Aline, too, was in reality dead, Solness had "sapped her life blood," had sacrificed her for his own happiness, and now she only seemed to live. But by this very fact he was bound to her—bound by the past, by his own sin. Hilda came and wanted to give him freedom, give him back a "robust" conscience, and for a while he thought that he could win back his dream of happiness, build "a castle in the air with a firm foundation under it." But it was impossible. Even Hilda experienced some feeling of how painful it could



FROM "THE MASTER BUILDER" AT THE CHRISTIANIA THEATER WITH JOHANNI DYBWAD AS HILDA

be to revolt against one's own past, and he who revolted was—literally—hurled to the ground

The dramatic strength of the play lies in the tremendous explosive force in the soul of Solness. Here is a strong man's full power rearing up in a wild struggle for its right to live, while a new love strikes fire and arouses will in him. Both in the Scandinavian countries and in Germany even good actors failed to make this man as great and as vital as he must be. Strangely enough, in this case it was the Frenchman Lugné Poë who achieved success and held it. In the fall of 1894 he ventured to go to Norway and play the part before Ibsen himself. Through the first act Ibsen sat still and immovable, but in the second act, as the action between Hilda and Solness mounted higher and higher with an impulse of love that swept like a storm over their souls, then Ibsen rose involuntarily, and his eyes riveted themselves on the actors, so that they felt the fire of his look and caught from it even more fervor than before. In the third act he sat leaning far out over the edge of the box. It was the triumph of *The Master Builder*. "This was the resurrection of my play," said Ibsen. He had again felt the tempest from it surging through his own heart.

Indeed, he was by no means through with the question which tormented him. Just at this time he was putting the last touches on a new drama which sought the way to a new solution. He could not reconcile himself to the thought of the tragic outcome, he still had hopes for his own longing for life. In Oslo in these years he won the friendship of a young woman—"a good, wise, and faithful friend," as he called her in a letter—who came to him with faith in him and with faith in the future.

It was the excellent pianist, Hildur Andersen. He was fond of her from the very first because she was the daughter of a friend of his youth, the civil engineer O. M. Andersen, and the grandchild of Madam Sontum who gave him such motherly care when he first came to Bergen. The thing that established a lasting bond between them was the fact that she had a brave, warm artist's soul which awakened new courage in him. So he wrote his drama anew. It grew into *Little Eyolf*. As soon as the new drama was finished, late in the fall of 1894, he gave the manuscript of the earlier play to his new friend. It was as if he would say that with her help he had attained what had formerly seemed hopeless.

He himself pointed out the inner connection between the two plays, when at first he took the verses which had been "the emotional introduction" to *The Master Builder* and made them a part of the conclusion in *Little Eyolf*. Alfred and Rita Allmers were to attempt what had been impossible for Solness and Aline—to dig out of the ashes the burned faith and happiness, the peace of soul, the will to live.

In the spring of 1894, while Ibsen went about turning over his new dramatic subject in his thoughts, there was a great newspaper controversy in Norway about the relation between literature and life. Chr. Collin, with his demand for a literature which should consciously and deliberately strengthen in people the courage to live, was in conflict with artists who were of the opinion that literature could not take into consideration anything but its own inner needs. There can be no doubt that Ibsen followed this controversy with wide awake interest, for it dealt with his own problems. When Collin, in one of his

newspaper articles, used the expression "the art of living" and made it a rallying cry for his program, the phrase struck Ibsen as if it were his own. At the time, in the *Brand* period, when he held his first great reckoning between art and life, he had let Brand give Einar, the painter, this word to take with him "Remember—that to live is an art." Now, in *Little Eyolf*, he wanted to make the art of living the great object of all education of human beings. He let Alfred Allmers give up writing of books and dreams of literary mastery and devote himself instead to life itself, working for human advancement and the new generations.

There were enough sins of the past to be redeemed in *Little Eyolf* also, and secret powers helped give poignancy to the nemesis idea. It was a childhood memory from Skien that brought the Rat Wife into the play—"Froken Varg," or "Aunt Ellen," as Ibsen had first thought of calling her. A certain "Aunt Ploug" had borne this nickname, and had marked the child's mind with the fascination of horror. She now brought vengeance because the parents had secretly, unconsciously, wished their child out of the way. But it was something of the same mysterious power of nature which ennobled the father's mind, too. The man in "On the Fells" had learned up there to steel his heart and to look down upon life in the valley as if it were only a play. When Alfred Allmers wandered about on the limitless fells, among glaciers and peaks, with only the stars burning above him, and when life seemed strangely to fall away from him, he learned that he had no claim on life, but that life had a claim on him.

It is noteworthy enough that Ibsen in this play, where he

tried to raise new hope for a wasted life, looked back to *The Lady from the Sea*, which had likewise found the way to hope and faith. He let Allmers protest against the theory that we are merely "creatures of earth." We are "something akin to the sea and the heavens too", and it was this that made him free and new. Both Alfred and Rita came under what Ibsen called "the law of change." The newest psychology calls it "sublimation." There were natural impulses in man which changed themselves into ideal powers, raised people up "towards the peaks, towards the stars, and towards the great silence," taught them the true art of living, the same which Brand had already learned—that in the loss of happiness lay the true spiritual gain.

Little Eyolf had little of "drama" in it, everything went on so quietly, so deep within the souls. The "change" itself, with its promise of new life, had something of autumn and falling leaves about it. It was like a man of broken hopes and weary faith trying to find something to cling to with what was left of his life. There was a woman whom Alfred in the innermost depths of his heart loved, and who loved him in return, but she was quite unlike Hilda, she did not want to capture him, she quietly and resolutely withdrew, and he was compelled to try life with his own resources. It was ennobling to the soul, but it was not happiness. Yet it was a life which could be borne, and which could open new vistas.

But revolt still lived in Ibsen's soul and broke out in wild tragedy in the drama *John Gabriel Borkman*. Various themes were intertwined in this new play. That which appeared most strongly was one which Ibsen had dealt with in *The Vikings at Hælgeland* and *Pillars of Society*—the man who sacrifices,

or betrays, his love for other considerations. It is easily understood that here a tragic battle flamed in the author—the battle between two kinds of claim, that which the craving for human happiness placed upon every man, and that which special gifts pointed out for the great man, “the exception.” The betrayal of love’s demand avenged itself on bank director Borkman just as well as on Consul Bernick, the heart was hardened, and the springs of life dried out. Bernick had yet been able to find salvage for the best within himself, Borkman was helplessly through with life—a living corpse.

Ibsen found enough of traits for his drama in the life about him. From the eighties he had heard of a powerful bank director in one of the small towns who, for the benefit of his bank and of large economic undertakings, had proceeded in such a manner that he was sent to prison, and in the nineties there developed in Oslo a boom which carried through great projects, but which brought with it recklessness and over-speculation. Borkman himself, however, Ibsen modeled after a man of whom he had heard in his youth—an officer of high rank who in 1851 was charged with dishonesty in his office, and who at first denied the charge in bold words, as if it were built merely upon small minded envy of the larger nature, but who soon after tried to take his own life, and who later secluded himself in lonely brooding. He was deprived of his office and was sentenced to hard labor for four years. After his release he lived entirely alone in his home, it was even said that he never again exchanged a word with his wife. Ibsen could surely never forget this story, and out of the memory Borkman was created.

Borkman was given his life lie on which to live, he as well

as the other ex convict in Ibsen's works, old Lieutenant Ekdal. He went about expecting that he should some day be called back to his life work. Moreover, Ibsen placed beside him a man who in a way caricatured and thereby emphasized the lie of his life. This was the old clerk Wilhelm Foldal with his everlasting tragedy which he was constantly polishing, and which he believed would some time make him famous as an author. Ibsen probably had him from an acquaintance of his youth, the old copying clerk Wilhelm Foss, who had once published a collection of verse, but who never went beyond this. He had once intended to include this man in *Pillars of Society* and later in *The Lady from the Sea*—so long had he carried the poor dreamer in his thoughts. Now he became a companion to John Gabriel Borkman.

But all this was merely dream life. Over against all the old men's dreams Ibsen placed the demand of the younger generation for full and complete life without consideration for anyone. All the old people contended for the young. Mrs. Borkman thought she could make her son raise the name of Borkman to honor again, her sister, whom Borkman once had deserted, wanted the boy as a comfort in her last days of life, old Borkman himself wanted him as a helper in his work. But young Erhart Borkman wanted life for himself. "I am young! I want to live, for once in a way, as well as other people! I want to live my own life! It is happiness I must have! I want to live, live, live!" He knew nothing of what life was, there was but a cry within him that he must plunge into life to find the joys and sorrows that it hid for him.

This cry arose from Ibsen's own soul. Oswald had uttered

it, and little Hedvig, and Johannes Rösmer. Now, as he grew old, it took on a deeper and more poignant tone—the tone of loss and regret. He had given of himself to the master builder Solness, and he gave of himself to John Gabriel Borkman, the sick wolf who shuffled back and forth in his cage with death in his heart. He thought of how *far* life might have been if he had followed the call of his heart and plunged into it with frank eagerness. He had, like Hedda Gabler, longed to “have power to mould human destinies,” to feel himself taking part in the struggle of life with a free soul. More and more he thought that this would have been the only happiness. When he tested his life, it seemed that he had not lived.

EPILOGUE

HE who studies the works of Ibsen with the idea that they were born of spiritual need, and that they primarily bear witness of the drama within his own soul, must often wonder at the manner in which his contemporaries received them and struggled with the interpretation of them. Many things which at that time seemed enigmatic and involved find a direct and natural explanation when one sees them in relation to the spiritual life of Ibsen himself. But his contemporaries did not fully understand how deeply personal was his writing. They sought for the meaning, the purpose of each work, and as the poetic symbolism appeared more and more strongly, while the author penetrated more and more deeply into hidden powers of the soul, people became more and more bewildered, and especially the dramas of his old age, from *The Master Builder* on, were subjected to many strange interpretations. Solness was taken to be a picture of Björnson, of Bismarck, or of Gladstone, and Hilda was interpreted as the morality of the future given flesh and blood. An Austrian lady, who wrote under the pen name Erich Holm, tried to interpret the whole last series of dramas as the promotion of a social political program of change, as works that at once portrayed, chastised, and built anew the whole of society. There was a veritable competition in ferreting out all that people thought must

conceal itself behind the characters and words in the world of Ibsen's drama. Even in the early nineties it had become customary to call Ibsen the Great Sphinx or the Sphinx of the North. Many people were irritated by the unsolved riddles which he offered the world, and some were of the opinion that he deliberately strove to be enigmatic. Everyone understood that Garborg meant Ibsen when in 1895 he let "The Magician Whitebeard" appear in *Haugtussa* and describe himself in the following words:

*I speak in riddles and act so wise,
That critic at critic cavils,
They find a meaning where none there lies,
And remain as stupid as devils*

*They sing the praises of that wise man
Who baffles their highest learning,
And now by my witchcraft the whole wide land
Into a madhouse I'm turning*

Ibsen was often annoyed by the fact that his plays were given interpretations of which he had never dreamed, and among acquaintances and friends he sometimes spoke of what his own meaning had been. But he did not deign to give the public any explanation, and in fact he was amused at the general guessing and searching. His sense of the ludicrous had not died out—of that we have evidence in one play after another, clear down to *John Gabriel Borkman*—and deep within him there dwelt a teasing devil which perhaps delighted in mystifying people.

Georg Brandes has related an incident which in a charming

manner shows us this side of Ibsen's nature Brandes had a daughter, Edith, who was twelve years old when *The Master Builder* came out, and when Brandes came to Oslo just at that time, Ibsen asked him "Well, what does Edith say of my drama?"

"She says," answered Brandes, "what is fitting for her age, that there is only one respectable person in the play—Mrs Solness She finds Hilda abominable—running after a married man "

A few years later, Edith came to Oslo and went to call on Ibsen

"Why, this is surely my Hilda," he said with a smile, "who comes to me, exactly as I had imagined her!"

Edith defended herself "I am not at all like Hilda "

"Why certainly you are," insisted Ibsen

Afterwards he gave her his photograph, and wrote on the back of it "What is Edith like?"

"Yes, what am I like?" she said

"I do not know," answered Ibsen, "but go to the country and stay there for a month or so, and then come back again In the meantime I will think about what you are like."

The child came back and wanted the autograph completed, and he wrote "Edith is not like anyone in the world, Edith is only like herself Therefore Edith is so—"

"What am I?" she asked

"That I do not yet know," was the answer, "go to Copenhagen, and return in a year or so In the meantime I shall have considered it and will add the conclusion "

"In this trifling incident," adds Brandes, "we have Ibsen's

desire to create suspense, his tendency to arouse uncertainty, to frame questions and present riddles, his inclination to break off at the interesting point, and finally his dramatic characteristic of postponing the solution of the riddle, pushing it into the future "

Nor was Ibsen blind to the fact that the riddles and the uncertainty called forth by his dramas really served as an advertisement for his books and increased their sale. Therefore he endeavored to weave around them a net of mystery and suspense. He willingly let it be known beforehand that a book by him was to be published, but no one was permitted to know what it dealt with or what its title would be, before it was on sale. Then the newspapers competed about first getting hold of it, and the whole mill of journalism was set going. In the case of *Little Eyolf*, in 1894, it happened that an outsider had found opportunity to read a few pages while the book was being printed, and he reported it to a newspaper man who instantly published the story. Ibsen was furiously angry, and made threats of both punishment and a suit for damages. In reality the whole affair served merely as a new trumpet blast for the book. Ever since the publication of *Pillars of Society*, 10,000 copies had been the normal edition for his books, but *Little Eyolf* had to be given two additional printings almost immediately after the first 10,000. Then *John Gabriel Borkman* appeared in a printing of 15,000 copies, an entirely unheard of edition in those days.

With great care Ibsen watched over all financial matters connected with the publication of his books, editions, sales, translations into foreign languages, productions at theaters. He had a

regular working period each day for the correspondence demanded by these matters, and he kept precise accounts of the income from both publishing and theatrical productions. As Denmark did not enter the international Bern agreement before 1903, his books were always without copyright, but he provided for simultaneous editions in other countries, and in this way he protected his rights. It entailed work, but it brought him money, too, and he became a rich man. As income and capital increased, the management of the money meant more and more labor. He did everything personally, with deliberation and care.

It was not only to economic matters that he thus gave thought. He kept an eye upon the manner in which his works were handled all over the world. In Oslo he could select actors for his rôles and give directions about the performance. In other parts of the world he had to content himself with giving advice to translators and theater directors. Both intellectually and economically he protected his name as a valuable asset. He could not prevent that an actor in some small town in far western America appeared and received the applause of the spectators as the true Mr. Ibsen, or that theater directors in out of the way places changed his plays to suit local conditions, or stole his titles for other plays. But such things became more and more rare, and could take place only on the outer edges of the civilized world. Everywhere else people stood in such awe of him that they did not venture to interfere with his rights.

Occasionally people were a little inclined to ridicule the strictness of his supervision, and the fact that he used his name for business purposes. To him it was entirely natural. He felt

the responsibility of the fame he had won in the world, and he recognized the duties that accompanied it. He could not tolerate that anything should be neglected. Just as he bent all his energies to making each work as perfect as possible, it seemed to him necessary that he should follow his works on their way out into the world and care minutely for the income they might bring. In things great and small he was a circumspect man of order, a patient and persistent worker.

He no longer became so angry as he had been in his youth when his books were misunderstood or wrongly interpreted. He could now regard such things with a smile, knowing that they belonged to the experience of a world author. When he was sixty years old his name had barely begun to struggle up in the world, when he reached seventy he was known and read in every land. None of his contemporaries except Tolstoi and Zola could compare with him in this respect. There were in existence even then more than seventy separate writings about him and his work—from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, England, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Poland, Russia, Hungary. "Ibsen is at this moment," wrote a periodical in Rio de Janeiro, 1895, "the name which puts criticism and interpretation in all cultured lands most actively to work." His seventieth birthday increased the enthusiasm which centered in him.

Involuntarily he must come to look upon himself and his work as on a piece of history. Immediately after *John Gabriel Borkman* had come out, plans began to be made in Germany for collecting all his works in a great historic edition, which should include even his articles and all the poems he had pre-

viously discarded, as well as unprinted plays from his youth Julius Elias and Paul Schlenther, particularly the former, laid the plan Ibsen himself made some objection at first, he did not wish to see in print what he himself had not found satisfactory But Elias persisted, and Ibsen gave his consent, indeed, he was finally quite pleased that the project was carried out The German collected edition began to appear at the time of his seventieth birthday, in March, 1898, with literary introductions for each volume by Schlenther and Georg Brandes

The plan in Germany gave the impetus for the preparation of a collected edition by the Gyldendal publishing company as well, though here the works of his youth were not included as they had been in Germany It was not before 1902 that an additional volume, containing these works, came out On the other hand, J B Halvorsen here gave a full account of the history of each of the works, and Ibsen himself assisted him at the task Ibsen wrote a foreword to the Danish edition, requesting the readers to take the works in chronological order He believed that "the strange, imperfect, and misleading interpretation and exposition" with which his last works had met must find their explanation in the fact that new generations did not see the connection between these and the older works "Only by comprehending and making one's own my entire production as a related continuous whole, will one receive the intended, striking impression of the various parts" With this thought in mind he now decided that he would complete what he had tentatively started in the winter of 1881, a book about himself, "a book which shall unite my life and my writing into a com

prehensible whole " Nothing came of it, this time either, but the thought bears witness of his state of mind

Sometimes in these years the feeling came upon him that his very fame had made him homeless He said in 1898 "He who has won a home for himself in many lands feels in his inner most being that he is nowhere at home, hardly even in his own native land " It was almost as if ordinary human life were denied him, he must on all occasions be only the great author Sometimes he longed to get away from Christiania, Norway was often too narrow for him In the spring of 1897 he wrote in a letter to Georg Brandes "Can you guess what I am dreaming about, and planning, and picturing to myself as delightful? It is this to settle on the Sound, between Copenhagen and Elsinore, in a free open place, where I can see all the deep sea vessels coming from afar and going afar I cannot do that here Here all bays are closed in every sense of the word, and all the channels of understanding are choked Oh, my dear Brandes, one does not without feeling the effect live for twenty seven years in spacious, free, and liberating cultural surroundings In here, or rather up here, among the fjords, I have my native land But—but—but—where do I find my homeland? The sea is what draws me most strongly " Longing for the sea had brought him home, now it drew him away again, and undoubtedly it would have lived in him wherever he had settled The truth was this it was another kind of life that he longed for, fame did not give the inner happiness and joy for which his heart thirsted

Then came his seventieth birthday, March 20, 1898, and un

hesitatingly he threw himself into all the honors and festivities which then surged up around him. On the anniversary day it self, telegrams, letters, and flowers from all parts of the world came pouring in upon him, a great number of theaters, especially in Scandinavia and Germany, played his dramas, commemorative writings and special editions were published. Speeches in his honor were given at his home by the president of the *Storting*, by delegations of artists, actors, and feminists. Besides he had to go to theatrical performances in his honor, to receive the torchlight procession of the students, and to sit at banquets in the evenings, where cabinet ministers and authors made speeches. Everywhere he himself must say something. At the first festive gathering he spoke freely from his heart, about his plans for writing and his feeling of happiness, but as time went on his speeches became more and more conventional thanks, a form without content.

Nor did he confine himself to the festivities at home in Oslo. Afterwards he went to the other Scandinavian capitals. He knew that it would be a strenuous period, but he relied on his strength, and regarded the journey as one of his duties from which he would not draw back. Moreover, there can be no doubt that it pleased his vanity to receive such homage.

He was in Copenhagen the first week in April. Not every thing there went off well. Those who had charge of the festivities did not always take their task quite seriously, they sometimes let the aged dramatist shift for himself, with a resulting planlessness and neglect instead of solemnity. Ibsen therefore carried away some bitter memories from this festive week, so



LORCHLIGHT PROCESSION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS CARRYING BIFORL
THE NATIONAL THEATER IN OSLO FOR THE 185TH ANNIVERSARY IN 1928

that he regretted having accepted the invitation "I had quite forgotten the lowland nature" Yet he experienced some joys there too He was deeply affected when, upon arriving in Copenhagen, he found in his hotel room the grand cross of the Order of Dannebrog Five years earlier he had received the cross of the Norwegian Order of St Olaf, as the first and only author to receive this honor The new cross had an almost greater significance, for it was awarded contrary to all rules, as Ibsen had not first been given the rank of commander

"How fine!" he said "Yes, indeed, it is a great honor Since Oehlenschläger no Northern author has received so high a Danish distinction" Two days later he went to King Christian IX to thank him He, king of authors, felt somewhat embarrassed at sitting in conversation with a king, even so simple mannered and kindly a king as Christian IX The thing that struck Ibsen most forcibly during the conversation, that which gave him the clearest idea of his present status in the world, was when the King said "My two daughters, the Empress of Russia and the Princess of Wales, would like to meet you" The next day Ibsen had at least one meeting with young minds which devoted themselves ardently to the service of art, when he saw Martinus Nielsen present *Brand* at the Dagmar Theater

Afterwards he went to Stockholm The Swedes showed a much finer sense for arranging a dignified celebration Here he was really the center of all the festivities, and here he was pleased In one of his speeches he said that it seemed as if his laborious life were being transformed into a fairy poem, a Midsummer dream The highest point of the celebration came with

his visit to King Oscar. The King had written a tribute to him, in a Norwegian publication commemorating his birthday. Now he spoke of "we two kings," and he gave Ibsen the cross of the Order of the North Star—"the greatest honor that could be bestowed on me," Ibsen said afterwards. He might well feel that he was heavily laden with honors when he returned to Norway.

Yet he felt no happier than before. The thought to which, first and foremost, he returned, was the squaring of accounts with his own life, a thought with which he had now been occupied year after year. Once, ten years earlier, he had said that when a book was once finished he took no more interest in it. Now he did nothing but ponder on his old works. He asked himself if his writing had been life, or if he had sold life for art and for a writer's name.

Henrik Wergeland, when he lay on his deathbed, wrote the proud words "I was nothing but poet." He had in mind the ideal of a poet's function which he had drawn in his youth. "Poets should be leaders in thought and teachers of the people," should lead their times even as the skalds led the army. Poet and warrior were one to him.

Thus it had seemed to Ibsen too. But now he began to think "I have been only a poet," and this "only" took on an unpleasant sound to him. It was not enough for a man to be a poet, he could not then become fully a man, he became only such a half man as Bishop Nicholas, who laid the plans, but must let the others fight. The fear of battle Ibsen had taken out of his own soul. It lived there, side by side with the courage to fight. But always he had at least wished that he might

stand in the forefront of the battle No one could have judged him more severely than he judged himself when he shrank back

Ibsen held the final reckoning with himself in the play which he made the "Epilogue" to his life work, the drama *When We Dead Awaken*

For many years it had been his regular custom to write a drama every other year, and we know that already in the summer of 1897, only half a year after *John Gabriel Borkman* was finished, he went about laying plans for "a new dramatic something" But he added "I cannot yet see clearly what will come of it" It was still quite formless When he celebrated his seventieth birthday he said that he had no intention of ceasing to write "I have, in fact, still divers whimsies on hand, to which I have not hitherto found opportunity to give expression Only after I have well rid myself of them, it may be time to stop" It is clear that he thought some time might pass before he went to work at the new drama, for he intended to take a year off to write a book of memoirs about himself The celebration and the work which followed now hindered him from writing any kind of book, but later in the summer it was the drama that began to engage his attention "I have put the characters of the play out to graze," he said to William Archer, "I hope they may thrive" At last, in February, 1899, he made the first notations, and the year went into preparing the play

Those who were near him have reported that he planned and wrote this play in a fever of intensity Involuntarily, they had a feeling that he believed it would be his last work, as it also proved to be At any rate, it developed into a casting up

of accounts with life such as perhaps no other author has made Ibsen himself once said that it was meant as an epilogue to all his dramas from *A Doll's House* on At another time he said that it was equally correct to call it the epilogue to the last drama series, beginning with *The Master Builder* Its inner relation with all of the last dramas is clear enough, the same fundamental question fills them all But *When We Dead Awaken* has much more strongly than the others received the stamp of an account with himself There is both the word "We" which he finally put into the title, and the fact that the main character in the play is an artist who takes account of his art Only in *Love's Comedy* can we find anything of the same kind

Nor had he ever written anything so personal since *Love's Comedy* It is his own life problem which trembles and vibrates through the new play, almost without concealment or change "I was an artist, Irene," says the sculptor, Professor Rubek That was his explanation of how he could bring himself to use the young woman he loved merely as subject for a work of art And she answers him scornfully "Poet!" "Why poet?" "Because you are nerveless and sluggish and full of forgiveness for all the sins of your life, in thought and in act" Yet she adds "There is something apologetic in the word, my friend Something that suggests forgiveness of sins and spreads a cloak over all frailty" He had drained the soul out of her in order to use it for his art, life was empty and bleak to her, she was only a shadow of herself In reality the same thing was true of him, he had thrown life away, and therefore the true artist's

power had died also. He yearned out toward something else. "All the talk about the artist's vocation and the artist's mission, and so forth, began to strike me as being very empty, and hollow, and meaningless at bottom." He wanted to put life itself in its place. But the longing was useless, for art was in reality life to him. "I was born to be an artist, you see. And, do what I may, I shall never be anything else." Therefore it was impossible to restore what had been destroyed. "When we dead awaken, what do we really see then? We see that we have never lived"—and never can live. In the war between the artistic impulse and the impulse to live there is no solution except death. Only that gives peace.

Such was the Epilogue Ibsen wrote to his life. So inescapably tragic did it appear to him.

While thus putting the final stone upon the structure of his work, he attained at the same time the completion of the artistic form toward which he had been striving in the last years. He who had once seemed the great master of naturalism in the theater had now become the symbolic writer above all others. In truth, all of his writing had carried within itself a symbolism, which more and more strongly had pressed its way forward, most strongly of all when he took his drama subjects only from his own soul. Then the words lost more and more the tone of the struggle and reality around him, then a submerged meaning seemed to quiver in each everyday word. An air of something hidden, something far away, hovered over each of the new works. One was impelled to ask: was this life—or was it a dream? The thing which gave rise to the new artistic form was the

struggle deep within his own soul He had turned away from life without, and gazed only into himself But from of old he knew that it was

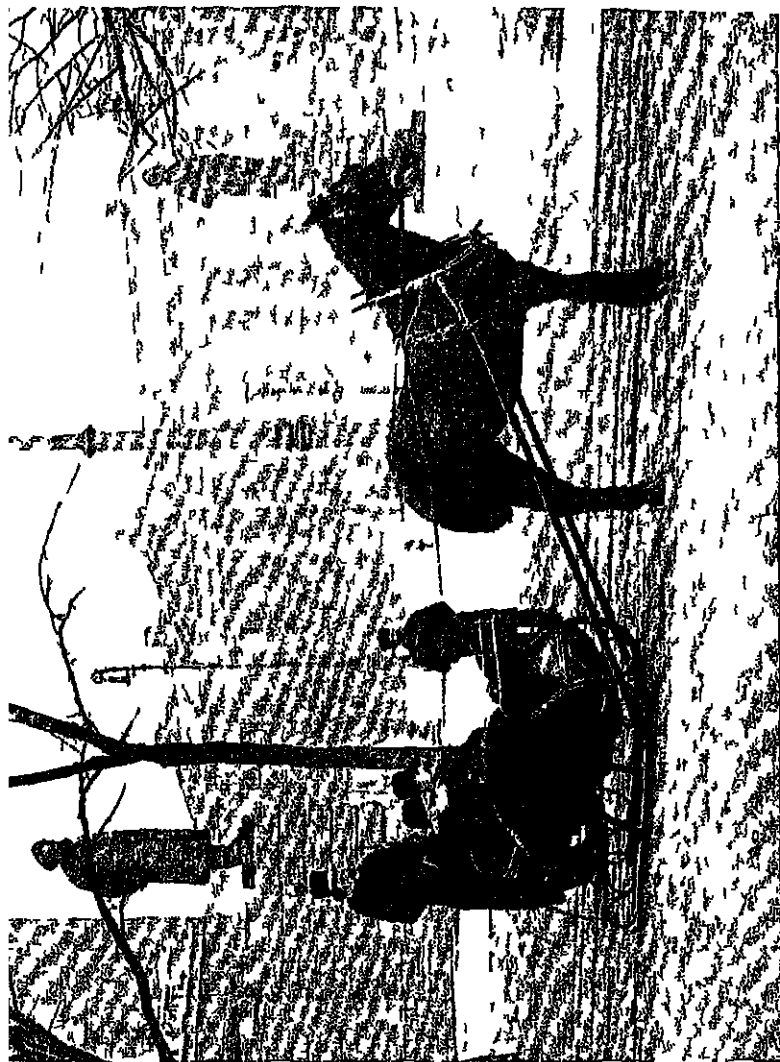
"Danger, danger there to dream"

There he found the judgment upon his life

It would seem impossible to write anything further after such an account and such a judgment, and indeed it was clear to him that if he should venture out again on "the old battle grounds," it must be "with new weapons and in new armor" Of what he meant by this we know nothing A whole year later, at the close of the year 1900, we still hear that he was occupied with "preparatory studies and work" for a new drama Indeed, even a year later he again spoke of "preparatory work" for "my next book" But in reality it was over He had done his life work, and was through

In the fall of 1899, after finishing *When We Dead Awaken*, he had the pleasure of being present at the opening of the new National Theater, for which he had agitated at the time he moved home Later in the fall he had occasion to show the lasting vigor of his impulse toward self-assertion when Björnson opened his great battle for the old literary language against the vernacular movement "In this matter," said Ibsen, "I am in full and undivided agreement with Björnson I am indeed It is self-evident We have both of us all our lives worked in that language, used it as our medium of artistic expression I will not be my own executioner, that I will not"

He adhered to his opinion, and fought for it to the last Early in the spring of 1900 he became ill, it was the first paralytic



IBSEN WITH HIS PHYSICIAN ON ONE OF HIS LAST RIDES

stroke During the summer he was in Sandefjord for his health, but when he returned thence, he no longer took his walks on Carl Johan One of his feet became helpless, and he kept to Drammensveien and the Queen's Park The following year he had a new stroke, and was forced to give up walking He could only drive out in a carriage or sleigh His thoughts were still active, but his ability to work diminished more and more The day came when his hands were no longer able to guide the pen His son once found him struggling to draw letters on a piece of paper

"See here," said the old man, "see here what I am doing, I sit here learning to write the alphabet, the alphabet—and yet I was once an author!"

The loss of his memory for words made it difficult for him to speak, one could see how it pained him when he hunted for a well known word and then after all said another

Could one call this life? Yet his mind still struggled against annihilation He could do nothing but sit at the window and look out upon the street, but he thought and understood I remember speaking to him once, in 1904, about his letters which were then being published When I brought him greetings from old German friends and from his sister in Skien, there shot up suddenly a strong gleam as of blue steel in his dull, heavy eyes But it was only a gleam, and then his eyes died again—the eyes that had once possessed such remarkable power

At last he was confined to his bed, unable to get up Death, which could but slowly overtake the strong man, was approaching His wife watched over him night and day Once, after a

night when he had slept quietly and well, he awoke in the morning fully conscious and with clear eyes

"See," said Fru Ibsen to the nurse who stood by, "the doctor will be quite well again "

Then his body raised itself with a jerk, his eyes fastened upon something invisible far away, and with a power that made the others start, he called out the single word "*Tvert-mot!*" ("On the contrary") It was Death he called upon, and his life was in that word

A few days later he died It was May 23, 1906 He was then seventy eight years old

The Norwegian State took charge of his funeral Something of the same contrasts that had dominated his life appeared in the funeral procession The funeral sermon was preached by the man who once helped give life to the character of Brand, Pastor Christopher Bruun But otherwise everything was official, as be fitted a distinguished citizen Present were the King, members of the Government and Storting, clergymen, officers, a high official who carried his decorations on a cushion, and so forth Wreaths and greetings were delivered, from homeland and foreign lands, in endless succession, all under the strict supervision of an official in the government It was a solemn occasion

The German critic, Alfred Kerr, wrote home from the funeral "The ruling men in Norway had a dæmon among them, and they buried a grandee "

Ibsen had been, and had wanted to be, both of these But the second was only external His soul, the true Henrik Ibsen, had been the dæmon, the eternal restlessness, the questioner and

soul searcher, the chastiser and seer, the poet who could never give up until he had broken his path down to the deepest foundations of human life

In his old age he had asked himself if his writing had indeed been life. He could read the answer in a single one of all the telegrams of tribute which he received on his seventieth birthday, one which weighed more than all the many hundreds put together, because it came from a man who had always been a doer of deeds—Fridtjof Nansen. He sent this thanks "to the man who marked my youth, who determined my development, who pointed out the claims of the calling and the nobility of the will." He who could influence so deeply a man like Nansen had indeed lived a great life. Nor was Nansen the only one who owed Ibsen such thanks. Generation after generation could have said the same. Ibsen had helped to change the whole intellectual atmosphere of the world. He had extended the boundary lines in the human search for truth. Not one, but many, many human destinies, he had moulded and led into new paths.

Perhaps he had been forced to sacrifice many of his own demands for happiness, when he gave all his life and all his powers to the writing from which he could never escape. But he did know that here he had his calling, the only thing which gave meaning to his life, and in his great creative moments he felt, with pain and joy, that life and mighty deeds arose from the conflict within him.

Thus his life was transmuted into lasting works of art, and in these works his life endures forever. Because he never was any thing but a poet, he was able to create works which rise in austere,

virile forms, filled with the blood from his own heart And because he gave every drop of blood to his writing, his writing acquired so powerful a life content for new and yet new generations It bears witness of what he was a Poet, and a Man

THE END

Index of Names

- Aall Niels I 19
 Aasen Ivar I 137
Aasgaardsvæsen I 130
 Abildgaard Theodor I, 53 54, 66,
 67 II 181
*About the Ancient Ballad and its Sig-
 nificance to the Art of Poetry* I
 109
 Achurch Janet II 267
Adam Homo I 263 265 II, 24, 26
 36 38
 Agder I 180
 Agnes I 282, 283 294
Ahasverus II 92 271
 Allmers, Alfred II, 305
 Alps II 90
 Altenburg Christine I 14
 Altenburg, Johan I, 10
 Altenburg Marichen see Ibsen
 Marichen
 Alving, Mrs II 164, 167 231
 Amalfi II, 149
 Ammianus Marcellinus II, 90, 91
 Andersen Hildur II 304
Andhrimner I 76 77 90, 103 II,
 28, 61, 62 68 69
 "Andvake II 293
 Antoine Andre II 271, 272
 Archer William II, 167, 267, 268,
 269 274
 Ariccia I 268
 Aristophanes II 66
Arne I, 161 166
 Asbjørnsen P C I 137 II 25
 Aschehoug T H I 243
 Åse II, 30
 Aslaksen I 69 II 62
 Assassination of Abraham Lincoln,
 The II 83
At the Sæter I 86 115
 Audun of Hegersnes I 148
 Auer J E II 91
 Augsburg State Theater II 260
 'Aunt Ploug II 305
 Austria II 95
 Awaken Scandinavians! I 235
 Axelsen, N F II, 62
 Babbitt II 35
 Bachke O A I 158 159, 302 II
 203
 Baetzmänn Fr II, 52
 Bagge, Magnus I 166 204 205
 Bigger Herman II, 62 63
 Bagler Bishop I, 222
 Balloon Letter II 78
 Balloonist and the Atheist, The
 II 40
 Bang, Herman II 282
Bankrupt, A II 125 126 129, 136
 138
 Bardach Emilie II 251 253, 257
 301
 Barth Marichen I 10
 Berchtesgaden II 9 57 95 159 187
 Berg Leo II 263
 Bergen I, 76 78 81 88 93 95 99
 104 114 115 120 135 136 160
 210 212 II 218
 Bergen Choral festival 1863 I, 210
 213
 Bergen Norwegian Theater II 110

- Bergen Theater I 76 78 81 84 86
 89 90 91 104 105, 114 135 136,
 138 139 165
 Bergeſøe Vilhelm II 48 93
 Bergson Henri II 242
 Berlin I 245 246 II 239
 Berlin Residenz Theater II 264
 Berlin Schiller Theater I 295
 Bernick Consul II 132 133, 307
 Bernini I, 250 251
Between the Battles I 126 137 220
 II 68
Beyond Our Power I 292 293 II,
 136 197
 Bird and Birdcatcher" I 73
 Birkeland M I 157 158 159 231,
 301 302 II 6
 Bismarck II 80 180
 Bjarme Brynjolf I 43, 46 49, 52,
 54, 56 66 68 76
 Bjerkebæk I 147 236
 Björnson Björnstjerne I 53 116
 126 127 129 130 134 137 138
 143, 144 146 149 150 151 154
 156, 159 161 166, 167, 178 181
 182 186 194 195, 198, 200, 201
 207 208, 211 213 216, 220 228
 230 262, 268 285 286 290 291,
 292 293 299 301 II 8 9 44 45,
 46 48 52 54 56, 64 66 68 79,
 85 112 118 125 126 129 134
 136 137, 138 141, 153 174 176
 186 189 197, 210 211 213, 265
 285 324
 Blanka I 55 93
 Blom family I, 19
 Blom, H. O. I 143, 152 154, 175
 Blom Johan I, 9
 Blytt, Peter I 104 105
 Bôgh Erik I, 236
 Boheme controversy II 221, 222
 Bohemia II, 95
 Borch Maria von II, 178 260
 263
 Borgaard Carl I 86 116, 200
 Borkman Erhart II, 308
 Borkman John Gabriel II 307 308
 309
 Botten Hansen Paul I 51 53 54 58
 62 66 68, 69, 90 116 137 139
 156 159 178, 196, 223 224 231,
 302
 Boyesen Ordning family I 19
 Boyg II 25 35
 Brack Judge II 254
 Blackstad H. L. II 114
 Brahm Otto II 138, 261, 262, 263
 265
Brand I 20 227 252 259 262 284
 285 298 300 304 II 8 17 19
 23 24, 27 34 39, 47 55 61 78,
 84 90 92 95, 97, 113, 126 145,
 181 196, 259, 295, in Denmark
 I 287 288, 291 296, in Germany
 I 295 296, in Paris I 295, in
 Russia I 297 298, in Sweden I,
 294 295
Brand I 252 267 277 277 283
 304 II 7 37 99 161
 Brandes Edith II 312
 Brandes Georg I 192 272 287,
 303 II, 16 17 44, 53 58 79, 83
 88 89 121, 125 126 169 195
 219 222 285 286 316
 Bratsberg Chamberlain II, 63
 Bratsberg Selma II 143
 Brenden Ulric II 199 232
 Broglie Albert de II, 101
 Brother in Need A' I 241
 Brun Johannes I 78, 87
 Brun Lovise I 78
 Bruun Christopher I 244, 248, 260
 261 II, 326
 Brynhild I 130 131
 Büchner II 88
 'Building Plans' I 46, 162 II 82
 Bull Ole I 76 77 87 II, 30
 "Burnt Ships" II, 10

- Button moulder The II 36 37
Byron I 255
- 'Caesar's Apostasy' II 102
Capellone I 248 253
Cappelen Diderik I 9 19
Cappelen Realf von I, 19
Caprice Un I 182
Carl XV I, 238 240, 243 262 302
II 76 77, 80
Carl Johan I 236
Casamicciola II, 32 33
Caspari Theodor II 196, 204
Castlere I 39 43 44, 45, 46 49 52
54 55 56 57 81, 100, 115 194
215 276 II 115 117 182 281
Chaine Une I 112
Christensen, H O I 301
Christian IX II, 319
Christiania I 52 53 58 59 75 199
II, 5 218 See also Oslo
Christiania Labor Union I 67
Christiania Norwegian Theater I
135 136 138 141 145 147 149
150 152 153 156, 165, 175 178
181 200 201 212
Christiania rifle corps I, 152
Christiania Society of Arts and Sci-
ences II, 293
Christiania Steam Kitchen II 185
186
Christiania Theater I, 49, 54, 72, 86
92 115, 116, 140 141, 142 151
152 154, 175 177 182 184 199
200 202 226 II 3, 68, 70 110
116 177 211 287
'Cleft The I 255
Collett Camilla I, 190 II, 139, 140
142 143 220
Collin, Chr II 304 305
'Complications I 193
Comte II 99
Conrad, M G II, 280 281
- Contes de la Reine de Navarre, Les*
I 102 103
Copenhagen I 78 79 231 232 245
II 4 5 75, 219 318 319
Copenhagen Royal Theater I 78 79
143 II 67 70 110 151
Corisaw (Corisaren) II 47
Count's Foul The I, 98
Crawford, Miss I, 33
Creation Man and Messiah I 293
Crocodile The II 120
- Daae, Ludvig I 100 156 158 159,
202 II 288
Dahl J C I, 79
Dahl Johan I 202 225
Dahlgren F A I 115
Dalecarlian squire The I, 98 99
Dalassman, The I 149 291
Danebrog Order of II 76 319
Danish German war 1848 I 37 44
235
Danish German war 1864 I 232,
236, 239
Darwin II 162
Dawn of Norway The I 44 288
289
Day of the Seven Sleepers I 90
Daylight Coward, The I 204
Denmark I 78 238 240 243 244
II 21
Descent of Man The II, 162
Dietrichson Lorentz I 248 249,
252 254 II 70 71 75, 216,
219 220 293
Dighton Wenche I 8
Doll's House A I 202 II 136, 147
157 158 159 162 164 165 169
207 266 271, in England II
267 268 in Germany II, 151
152 154 155 265
Don Juan I 255
Dorf Dina II 142
Dostojewski II, 258

- Doubt and Hope" I 36
 Dovrø King II 34
 Drachmann Holger II 167
Drama Norvegien Le II, 272
 Drammensveien II 293
 Dream at Akershus, The' I 97
 "Dreams of Youth. I, 74
 Dresden II 57 70 75 77 79, 80,
 81 120
 Due Christopher I 35 36 43 45
 46
 Dunker Bernhard I 230
 Duse Eleonora II 276
 Duun Olav I 132
 Dybbøl I 232 234 245 246
 Dybwad Johanne I, 297 II 156
 302
 Earl Skule I, 226
 Ebbell Clara I, 44 45, 55, 74
 Editor The II, 125 126 129 136
 Egils saga I, 133
 Egypt II, 77 79
 Ehrhard Auguste II, 272
 Eide Egil I 297
 'Eider Duck The' I 73 II 1
Esther Or I 169 II, 145
 Ekdal Hedvig I 27 II 205 206
 Ekdal Hjalmar I 92 II, 204 208,
 225 256
 Ekdal, Old II 207
 Elias, Julius II 265, 316
 Elina. I 96
 Ellida II 244 247
 Else II 174
 Elster Kristian I 224
Emperor and Galilean II, 98 106
 107 109 112 113 115, 135 162
 265
Enemy of the People An II 136,
 180 190, 191, 194 195, 197 208
 267; in France II 273; in Ger
 many, II 263 264
 Engeström, Lars von II, 115
 England II 114 115 266 270
 Epilogue II, 321
 Erasmus Montanus I, 195
 Escholiers Les II 273
Evening at Akershus Castle An I
 97
Eytem Meila I 224
 Fahlström, Johan II, 302
Fairy Bridal, The I 69 90
 Falk I 172 173 189 191, 192 195
 Falkman A II 16
 'Far Away (*Langt Borte*) II 122
 124
 Farmers party, 1850 I 58 59
Faust II, 96
 Faye Andreas I 202
Feast at Mars Hill The I 119 206
Feast at Solhoug, The I 95, 108
 117 118 119, 120, 128, 129 134,
 142 144 148 157, 194 195 227
 II, 265; in Denmark I, 115 116;
 in Sweden I 115
 February Revolution The I 36 43
 Fechner II 89
 Fieldbo Doctor II, 66
 Flood family I 18
 Foldal Wilhelm II 308
 'For Norway the Birthplace of He
 roes II 28
For Thought and Reality II, 65
 Fortun in Sogn I 266
 Foss Frithjof I 53 220
 Foss Wilhelm II 308
 "Fountain of Memory, The" I 45
Fra Kristiana-bohemien II, 222
 France II 115, 270 274
 Frascati II 18
 Freie Bühne Berlin II 265
 Freie Bühne, Vienna II, 278
 Fröding, Gustaf I 203
 Frohn, Charlotte II, 262
 "Fröken Varg" II, 305
 "From the Dybbøl Days" I, 245

- From the Silent Camp* II 140
 Fulda, Ludwig II, 260 263

 Gabler Hedda II 254-255 256 258 297
 Galileo I 276
 Gandalf I 55
 Garborg Arne I 293 II 27 108 176 311
 Garibaldi II 43
Gaunist, The II, 197
 Geijerstam Gustaf I 294, 295
Geistige Leben in Danemark Das II 113
 Genzano I 248 263 268
 Gerd I 297
 Germanova, Maria I, 298
 Germans II 21
 Germany I 78 II 5, 13, 14 79 87 112 114 138 270 315 316
 Gert Westphaler I 160 161
Ghosts I 136 158 170 171 178 180 197 200 207 208 266 267 270 271 275, in America, II 178, in Denmark II 176 177 178, in England II 269 270, in France II 271 272, in Germany II 177 178 259 263 264 265 266, in Sweden II, 177 178
 'Giant Oak The' I 235
 Gjerpen II 62 63
 Gjertsen II 116
 Goethe II 53 83 96 252
Golden Harp The (Guldharpen) I 56, 64
 Goldschmidt M I 62 68 II 47
 Gosse Edmund II 114 266 268
 Gossensass II 145 146 193 194 250 251 253
 Gossman Friederike II 264
Governor's Daughters The I 190 II 139
 Grand Hotel II 292
 Grandauf Franz II, 120
 Greif, Martin II 280 281
 Grein J T II, 269
 Grevstad N II 175
 Grieg Edvard II, 110 284
 Grimstad I 24 30 33 35, 52, 179 II 10 131
 Grosse August II 260 264
Grouse of Justedal The (Rypen i Justedal) I 64 72
 Gudbrandsdalen I 183 266 II 25 26
Gulbrandsdølerne I, 175
 Gudrun I 108 129, 131
Guldharpen I 56
 Guldstad I, 192
 Gulla Cry I 148 149
 Gundersen Laura I, 128, 175, 294 II 218 233
 Gylendal I 262 285 II 316
 Gynt, Peer I 16, 32 92 II 25 32 34 42 60, 161 295

Haakon Jarl I 46
 Haackel II 88
 Hail Song! I 210
 Håkon Håkonsson I 212 214 216, 219
 Hallgerd I 108 131
 Halvorsen J B II 316
 Hamlet I 101
 Hamsun Knut II 288 290
 Hansen Bernhard I 67
 Hansen Irgena. II 213
 Hansen Mauritz I 47
 Hansen Peter II 81
 Hattstein Astr II 139 140
Happy Boy A I 166
 Hirdanger I 183
 Harring Harro I 54
 Hartmann Eduard von II 89 100, 168
 Hauch Carsten I 110 II 92
 Hauptmann Gerhart II 266
 Hebbel Friedrich II, 134

- Hedda Gabler* II 253 258, 277 297;
in England, II 269 270; in France
II 273; in Germany, II 277 278
Hedin, Adolf II 85
Heffermehl J I 301
Hegel, Fr I 262 268, 285
Hegel, G W F I 60 61 62 75
194 II 88 89 99
Heiberg Gunnar II 147
Heiberg Johan Ludwig I, 60 62 64
71 75 78 79 88 90 91, 143
169 173 174 II, 36, 61
Heine, Heinrich II 98
Heire Daniel II, 63
Helge Hundingsbane I, 65 76
'Hellenist II, 98
Helmer II 151
Heltberg student factory ' I, 52 53
Hennings Betty II 151 156
*Henrik Ibsen et le Théâtre contem-
porain* II 272
*Henrik Ibsen und das Germanentum
in der modernen Literatur* II, 263
Henryk Ibsen poeta norwegski II
115
Herlog Hudfat I 97
Hertz Henrik I 110 113 116, 118
Hessel Lona II 139, 140
Hettner Hermann I, 80 81, 102 128
219 II, 134
Heyse Paul I 127 II 120
Hilberg Emil I 295
Hjördis I 124 126, 130 131 132,
190 II 142 165 166
*Historic Tales of the Deeds of the Ice
landers at Home and Abroad* I, 107
History of the Norwegian Nation I,
106, 144
Hoffroy Julius II 261, 262
Holberg, Ludvig I, 41, 88 160 161
276 II, 33
'Hollanders, The I 156 161 183,
231 259, 299 301 II 31, 65, 116,
118, 288
Holm, Erich (pseud) II 310
Holst Rikke I 93 96 108 II 73,
218 246
Holt Miss I 57
Holtermann Heinrich I 7
Home of the Fairy The I 72 86 88
175 II 29
Home Study A" I, 261
Hostrup C I 79 90
Hungary I 36 44
Huxley II 89
Hwasser Elise II 151
'Hydra I 203
Ibsen, Hedvig Cathrine I 17, 21 22,
24 25 27 28 278
Ibsen Henrik (the poet's grandfa-
ther) I, 8 14 15
Ibsen Henrik (the poet's great grand
father) I 7 8
Ibsen Johan Andreas I 17 22 27
Ibsen, Knud I, 9 10 15 19 II, 29
207
Ibsen Marichen I 10 14 17 30
Ibsen Nicolai Alexander I 17 22
27
Ibsen Ole Paus I, 17 25 27 278
Ibsen Peter I 7 12
Ibsen Sigurd I 150 II, 57, 79 146
203 204 211 283 284
Ibsen Susannah see Thoresen, Susan-
nah
Ibsen Gerdeinde II, 263 264
Ibsenplatz Gossensass II 193 250
'In the Picture Gallery I 91 167,
202 204, 255 295
Inga I 12
Ingeborg I 124
Inger Lady I, 101 102
Ingerd Ottesdotter of Austrätt I 98
99
Ischia II, 9, 32 33, 43
Italy I 247, 249, 257 II 5 23, 57
214

- Jaabæk II 84 85
 Jacobsen J P II 162
 Jæger Henrik II 265 268
 Janson Kristofer II 20 54 182
 Jatgeir I, 13 14 228
 Jensen (a printer) II 7
 Jensen P R I 72 137 175
John Gabriel Borkman II 306 309 313
 Johnstone A II 115
 Josephson Ludvig I 294 II 40 110
 Journey of Forgetfulness I, 244
 Juell Johanne II, 151 156
 Julian Emperor I 251 252 285 II 17 18 57 78, 90 106, 107 296
Julian the Apostate (by Carsten Hauch) II, 92
 Julie Aunt II 254, 256
 Jutland II 239

Kalanus II, 92
 Kielland Alexander II 174 214
 Kierkegaard Sören I 37 45 60 61 63 169 261 272 273 277 281 291 II 27 37 53 98 145 180
 Kul Morten II 184
 Kinck Hans E I 131
King The II 136
King Haakon's Guild Hall I 148
King Sverre I 181 212 220
Kjømpelidsen I 54
 Klingensfeld Emma II 113 137
 Knudsen Knud I 176 177 188
 Knudsen Roland I 10 11
 Knut Alvsson I 97 99
 Koll I 252 267
Kraft und Stoff II 88
 Kroll Rector II 232

 Laading Herman I 82 87
 Labor Union II 215 216, 218
Lady from the Sea The II, 244 250 277; in England, II, 268; in France II 273; in Germany, II 265
Lady Inger of Gøstråt I 95 105 106 115, 116 137 142 146 157 181 198 219 II 6, 110 114 117 218
Lame Hulda I 129 130 137, 144 182 212
 Lammers G A I 25 277 278
 Lammers Thorvald I 118
 Landstad M B I 108 137
 Lark The II 144
 Lassen Hartvig I 116
Last Papers II 139
Laxdæla Saga I 108 129 131
League of Youth the I 227 II 10 13 57 69 70 74 77 93 113 116 125 126 143 144 161 181 189 207 287
 Lehmann Orla I 237
 Lemaître Jules II 271 272
Leonarda II, 136
 Lerche F G II 31
 Leth Chr I 18
 Letter to H Ö Blom ' I 153
 Lewis Sinclair II 35
 Liberal Students Society II 221 222
 Lie Jonas I 53 II, 9 159 186
 Lieblein J I 143 291
 Lincoln Abraham I 233
 Lindberg August I 295 II, 178 287
 Lippe Jacob von der I 8
 Listov A II, 93
 Literary Society I 152
Little Eyolf II 304 306 313
 'Little Theodor' pastor at Vestnes I, 291
 Löberg T J I 301
 Lofthus Christian I 47
 Løkke Jakob I 159 302 II 72 81
 Lord Henrietta Frances II 266
Lord William Russell I, 188
 Lotze II 88
 Lövborg Eilert II 254 255 256
Love without Stockings I, 51

- Love's Comedy* I 92 124 164, 172
 182 187 199 202, 261 223 224
 228 239, 270, 276 292 293, 300
 II 17 18, 19 24 74, 83 109, 116
 142, 176 177 249 295 322, in
 Denmark I, 197 198
Lövenskiöld Severin I 19
Lundestad II 61
Lundh Gr F I 99
Lunge Vincentius I, 98
- Magazine for the Language and History of the Norwegian People* I, 99
 'Magician Whitebeard The' II, 311
Magnus Heineson I 231, 245 251
 285 II 17 90, 94
Main Currents II 88
Man The I 68 73 140 187
Manders II 160
Manderstrom Count I 238 239 241,
 254 II, 74
Margrete I 218 219
Marx Karl I 234 II 83, 88
Marx Aveling, (Mrs) Eleanor II
 267, 268
Master and Disciple I 79 90
Master Builder The II, 299 303
Maupassant Guy de II 282
Medjidie, Order of II, 76
Merdell Ditmar I, 194 195 196 II
 30
Meiningen, Georg Duke of II 114,
 261
Meiningen Royal Theater I, 227 II
 114
Meissner Alfred II 185
Mermoid, The II 244
Michelangelo I, 250 251
Midsummer Night's Dream A I 90
Mill, John Stuart II 139 168 170
 180
 Miner, The' I, 73, 203
Miramare I, 247
- 'Miscellaneous Poetry from the Years
 1848 1849 and 1850 I 33
Moe, Jörgen I 137
Molde II 216 217 238
Moltke II, 80
Molvik I 92 II 208
Monrad M J I 52 60 194 195
 196, 225 291 II 49
Monsen Chr I 175
Morgenstern Christian I 296
Mortensgård Peder II 232
Moscow Art Theater I 298
Mountain Adventure The I 139
Mountain Bird The I 149
Mowinkel Agnes II, 248
Müller Carl I 51 52
Munch Peter Andreas I 45 64 97
 98 99 106 137 143 144 188
 207 219 225 303 II 128
Munich II 9, 57 120 121 159 223
 243, 277 278
Munich Royal Theater II, 114 277
 278 279
 'Musicians I, 73 II 82
Musset I, 182
- Nansen Fridtjof* II, 327
Nazarene II 98
Nazimova Alla II 157
Neander August II 91
Neo Platonism II 99
New System The II, 136
Nicholas Bishop I, 217 218 219
 222
Nidaros I 97
Niels Lykke I 181
Nielsen, Martinus I, 296 II 319
Nielsen Rasmus I, 276
Nile II 77
Nils Lykke I 100, 103
Nilsen, Randolph I 211
Nineteenth Century The II 122
Nittende Aarhundrede Det II, 122
Njalsaga I, 108, 110, 131

- Nora* II, 151 265
Nora II, 150 153 157 163 165
Nordfjord I 183
Nordland I 208
Nordmøre I 208
Norges Dæmring I 44
Norma or a Politician's Love I 187
 II 61
Normans The I 46 47 54
North Star Order of the II 320
Northern Studies II 268
Norway I, 303 304 II 5 14, 19 57
 76 77 115 118 119 130 210
 211 229 281 283 317
Norwegian Carl Johan Association I,
 152
Norwegian Church Department II,
 159 160
*Norwegian Fairy Tales and Folk
 Legends* II 25
Norwegian Mysteries I, 69
Norwegian Society The I 151 152
 156 159 178
Norwegian Veritas II 130 131
Norwegian Woman's Rights Society
 II 157
Novalis I 74

Oehlenschläger I 41 42 45 46 47,
 49 55 56 65 74 93 107 125
 143 II 127
Olaf Liljekrans I 118 1 9 123 133
 144 149 II 39
Olav Engelbriktsson I 98
Old Norse II 54
Oleana II 30
Olsen Rolf I 137 208
Olby Boys The I 132
On Human Liberty I 60 61
On the Fells I 169 172 191 II, 295
Origin of Species The II, 162
Orlenjeff Pavel I 298
Örnulf I, 133

Oscar II King II 111 293, 320
Oslo I 135 139 148 150 157 161
 162 165 183 204 205 210 II
 5 116 291 292 See also Christi-
 ania
Oslo National Theater I 297 II
 324
Østgaard I 137
Oswald II 164 166
Overskou Th I 78

Paludan Müller C I 98
Paludan Müller Fr I, 42 72 263
 265 271 II 37 38 40 92
Paris I 209
Passarge Ludwig I 296 II 259
Paulsen John II 159
Paulsen Julian I 92 II 28
Paus Christian I 26
Paus family I 9 11 18 19 24
Paus Hedeveg I 11
Paus Ole I 11
Peder Chancellor I 98
Peer Gynt I 20 II 9 17 19 24 45
 47 48 51 55 56 93 97 110 135
 259
Petersen Clemens I 197 198 221
 224 226 245 II 45 52
Petersen Laura II 78
Petersen Margret II 132
Petersen N M I 107
Petrel The' II 82
Philippi Felix II 260 264
Philosophie des Unbewussten II 89
Pillars of Society II 10 125, 129
 138 141 143 145 146 152 158
 207 250 267 275, in England II
 268, in Germany II 138
Plesner family I 19
Plesner Johanne Cathrine I 9 15
Plesner Knud I 10
Plesner Nicolai I 15
Plimsoll Samuel II 129 130
Poe, Lugné I, 295 II 273, 303

- Paens* II 109
 Poulsen Johannes, II 67
 'Power of Memory The' I 256
Pretenders, The I 209, 213 228 230, 245, 270, 276 II 17 79, 109 113 142, in Germany I 227 228, II, 114 279, in Vienna II, 278
Prisoner at Agershuus The I 47
 Prozor (Count) Moritz II, 270, 272, 273 274

 Quesnel Leo II 115
Quiescence of Ibsenism, The II 269

 Raabe Hedwig Niemann II 152, 154 155
 Ramlo, Marie II 152 154
 Randers Kristofer II 288
 Rank Doctor II 162 163 164 166
 Rat Wife II 305
Räuber Die I 273
 Ray Catherine II, 115
 Reicher Emanuel II, 262
 Reimers Arnoldus II 213
 Reinhardt Max I 227
 Réjane Gabrielle II 273
 Renan Ernest II 89 107, 160
 'Resignation' I 33 203
 Revolution of 1848 I 58
Revue bleue II, 115
 "Rhymed Letter to Fru Heiberg" II 80
 Richter Ole I 301 II, 64
 Riddervold Hans I 207 208 300, 301 II 111
 Riis Claus Pavele I, 115
 Rod Edouard II, 271 273
 Rome I 209 248 249, 251 252, 258 260 263, 302 II 20 21 43, 85, 146, 160 183 192 193, 214
 Romsdalen I 183
 Rosenberg C I 196 225
 Rosmer II 230 235 256, 296 297
Rosmersholm II, 11, 173 174, 200, 229 236 237 238, 263 271, in England II 269, in France II 273, in Germany II 264
 Rousseau I 273
 Royal Norwegian Scientific Society in Nidaros I 299 303
 Rühkopf Julie I 296
 Runeberg Walter I 248
 Russians I 297 298
 Rygh Oluf I, 158
Rypen i Justedal I 64

 Sæby II 239
 Sæter, Mother I 53 57
 Sagas of the Norwegian Kings I, 106
 Saint Cère Jacques II, 270
St John's Night (Sankthansnatten) I 90 92, 118 276 II, 28 39
 St Olaf Knight of II 111 319
 St Peter's Church in Rome I 268, 269
 Saint Simonists II 98
 Sarcey Francisque II, 271, 272
 Sarolea, Charles II 272
 Sars J E I 97 159 II, 54 88 119, 176
 Savine, Albert II 272
 Saxon Ernestine Order Commander of II, 261
 Scandinavian Club in Rome I 248 254 II 20 22 147 148 149 183
 Scandinavian orthographical meeting II 72
 Scandinavian Students' Convention 1851 I 76
 Scandinavian union I, 44
 Scandinavian unity I, 234 236 237
 Scandinavianism I 235 238 244 II 122
 Schack, H E II 53
 Schiller I, 273
 Schjøtt, Mathilde II, 139
 Schjøtt, P O II 176
 Schlenther Paul II, 138, 261, 316

- Schmidt Julian II, 134
 Schopenhauer II 88 97 98 168
 Schulerud Ole I 36, 43 49 50, 53
 56 57 II 150
 Schwaz II 210
 Schweigaard Professor II 64
 Scott Walter (bookdealer) II, 267,
 268
 Scribe I 88 102 104 112 219
 Sea Bird The ' II, 206
Seducer's Diary, The II, 145
 Shakespeare I 41 42 90, 101 II
 208
 Shakespeare and His Influence on
 Scandinavian Literature I, 117
 Shaw George Bernard II, 269
 Sibbern F C I 169
 Sibbern V C V I 302
 Siebold, P F I, 296 II 113
 'Signals of the North' II 14
 Sigurd I 132
 Sigurd Fafnirbane I 131
Sigurd Slemba I 186 212, 221
 Sigurd the Crusader II 79
 Skavlan, Olaf I, 119 206 II 176
 Skaw The II, 239
 Skien I 8 9 10, 15 18 19, 23 25
 26 28 29 52 II 10 62 63, 184
 Skule Bårdsson I 144 209 213, 214
 215 216 217 218 219 222, 228
 Slesvig I 36 44
 Smith Petersen Morten II 131
 Snorriky Carl I, 253 254 II 74
 226 229
 Socialism in Ibsen ' II 269
 Society of December Twenty-second
 I, 117 125 152
 Sogn I, 183
 Solness, Aline II, 302
 Solness Halvard II 300 301, 303,
 310
 Solveig II 35 39 42
 'Son Burial The' I 133
 'Song about Ibsen, The' II, 279
 Sontum Helene I 84 II 304
 Sorrento II⁸ 33
 Sorrow like Silver" I 118
Spirit After Death A II 56
 Springtime of Life, The' I 162 164
 Stabell, A B I 70 II 61
 Stang Frederik I, 301
 Star in a Nebulous Mist ' II 223
 Steen Headmaster I 301
 Steensballe I 56
 Stella (Clara Ebbell) I, 74
 Sten Sture I 98
 Stensgård II 60 63 64 65, 66 67
 Stockholm II 71 72 74 75 319
 320
 Stockholm Dramatic Theater II, 70,
 110, 151 178
 Stockholm New Theater I 295
 Stockmann Doctor II 183 187
 Stockmann family I 17 18
 Stouland Hedvig see Ibsen, Hedvig
 Cathrine
 Strange Hunter The I 170 171
 Strauss II 89
 Strawman Pastor I 192 208
 Strindberg August I 294
 Strodtman Adolf II 113 259
 Storm Gustav II 293
 Storching I, 138 150 152 174 208
 239 243 244 300 301 303 II,
 120, 214
 Storching, The ' I 182
 Stub Paul I 77
 Students Association I 50, 56 66
 77, 152 204 229 243 244 II
 216 218 221
 Students' Association (Copenhagen)
 II 219
 Students Society (Copenhagen) II
 240
Studies in Aesthetics II 17 58
*Studies in the Literature of Northern
 Europe* II 266
Subjection of Women, The II, 139

- Suez Canal II 77
 'Summons to Norwegian and Swedish
 Brothers I 44 ?
 Sunnmøre I 183 266
Svanhild I 172 174 188
Svanhild I, 124 189 190 II 142
Svein Mountaineer I 32
Svend Dyring's House I, 110 113
 116 118 II, 195
Svendaen, Laura see *Gundersen
 Laura*
Sverdrup Johan I 27 230, 301 II
 54, 64, 84, 120 201 202 222 223
Swedes II, 21
Swedish Authors Association I, 151
Symbøve Solbakken I, 137 166
- Teacher, The* I, 293
 'Terje Viken' I 179 181 232
Tesman Jorgen II 254 255
 'Thanks (Tak) I, 124
Thaulow Harald II, 185 186
Thédire d'Hausk Ibsen II 272
Third Empire II 98 100, 102 105
Thoresen Magdalene I 85 120
 123 II 244 245
Thoresen Pastor I 162
Thoresen Susannah (Fru Ibsen) I,
 121 125 158, 181 II 172 203
Thrane Marcus I, 59 II, 131
Tissot Ernest II 272
 'To Norway's Skalde' I 47
 'To Sweden II, 122
 'To the Only One' I 121
 'To the Partners in Guilt II, 28
 'To the Survivors' I 174
Tönsberg Chr I, 115
Tordenskjold I 143 175
 'Traveler's Song' I 94, 162
Trøndelag I 208
Trondheim II, 215 216
Trygvason, Olav I, 46
Two Shots II, 167
- Two Theaters of Christiania, The*
 I 177
- Ueland O G* I, 70 II 61
Ulsvollen Anders II 25
Uppsala University II, 111
- Vasenius Valfrid* II 194 195
Venetsians The I, 50
Venstop in Gjerpen I 20
Veire d'Eau Le I 103
Vin Capo le Case II, 193
Via del Tritone I 253 258
Vibe F L I 51
Vibe Johan I 291
Victoria Terrasse II 290
Vienna II 278
Vienna Burg Theater II 114
Vienna World Exposition, 1873 II
 111
Vikings at Helgeland The I 124
 125 134 135 137 141 147 157
 175 188, 190, 220 276 II 6 110,
 114, 135, 142; in Germany II,
 279 281
Vincens Charles (Arvède Barine)
 II 115
Vinje Aasmund O I, 53 62 63 64
 67, 68 69 149 159 161 167,
 208, 223, 255, 291 299 II, 31
 54 88
Vogt Carl II, 88
Volsung Saga II 128, 130
Voltaire II 83
Vullum, Margrete II 175, 212
- Wangel Hedwig* II, 155
Wangel Hilda II 301 302
*Warrior's Barrow The (Kjæmpe
 høien)* I, 54 56, 62 64 65 72 92
 93 107, 129
Wasen Order of II 76
Welhaven I, 44 45, 47 63, 72 127,
 137, 206, 288 289

- "Well Grounded Faith" I 245
 Werenskiold Erik II 300
 Wergeland, Henrik I 41, 42 45 47,
 50, 60 63, 86 288 293 II 123,
 127 320
 Werle, Gregers II 205, 208
 Wessel J H I, 51
 West, Rebecca II, 233 235 237 238
 243, 258
 Wexels, W A I 288
When we Dead Awaken II 321 325
White Horses II 231
 Wiehe Vilhelm I, 115, 152 153 II,
 67
Wild Duck The I 92 II 194, 196,
 198 200 203 209, 210 225 249,
 259 263 264; in France II 272
 273; in Germany II, 265
 Willemer Marianne von II, 252
 "With a Water Lily" I, 204
 "Without a Name" II 80
 Wolf Lucie Johannesen I 83
 Wolff, S O I 45
 Wolter Charlotte II, 114
 Wolzogen Alfr V I, 296
 Zola, Émile II, 171 173, 271

